Isti'adha Seeking Allah's Protection from Satan

Ayatullah Sayyid Abdul Husayn Dastghaib Shirazi

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

Isti'adha Seeking Allah's Protection from Satan

:Writer

Ayatullah Sayyid Abdul Husayn
Dastghaib Shirazi

:Published in print

(World Islamic Network (WIN

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

Contents

Isti'adha Seeking Allah's Protection from Satan

BOOK ID

Author(s): Ayatullah Sayyid Abdul Husayn Dastghaib Shirazi

Translator(s): Sayyid Tahir Bilgrami

(Publisher(s): World Islamic Network (WIN

Category: Supplications Spirituality

Topic Tags: Istiadha

Featured Category: Spirituality

point

An explanation of Istiadha through its five aspects namely, piety, remembrance of Allah, resignation on the wishes of Allah, honesty of purpose and humility in .supplication

Translator's Note

In my early childhood my grandmother used to tell us that when we had any fear of :darkness or we found ourselves in any lonely place, we should recite

أَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

I seek refuge from Satan, the cursed one

She told us that when we recited this, the Shaitan or the evil spirits, if they were around, would run away. She asked us to recite this whenever we came out of our home, while going to school or any other place. She also asked us to say these words :before we said

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Before eating our food or commencing any work. Later on, during our theology classes at the school I learnt about the basics of Isti'adha.

Recently I have read a compendium of transcripts of ٣٠ lectures, Sermons, given by the Shahīd al-Mihrab Ayatullah Dastaghaib Shirazi. The erudite scholar has very skilfully encompassed all the aspects of Isti'adha drawing references from the authentic traditions and the Holy Book.

Without going into the technicalities, which are for the scholars and the researchers to delve in, the Ayatullah has give a very apt explanation of the concept

for the layman to understand. What really surprises me is that every individual Muslim, from the very childhood, gets used to seeking, Isti'adha - Allah (S.w.T.)'s Protection against the machinations of Satan. This is done as a force of habit cultivated through the instruction of the elders at home. But the details of the need for .doing it are known, to but a few

A reading of the transcripts of the ٣٠ lectures convinced me that they must be .available to as wide a group of Muslims as possible

Hence this translation! I pray to Allah (S.w.T.) that the translation gets published, gets widely circulated, and the spiritual reward (ajr) goes to the Shahīd Dastaghaib. Insha !(.Allah (S.w.T

Preface

!Real protection can come only from the Force that is All-Pervading

This work of Shahīd al-Mihraab Ayatullah Dastaghaib is presented under the title and ."style of "Isti'adha

As is very evident from the title, the subject of the presentation is about seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection against the manoeuvrings of Satan. With his high learning and knowledge of the Verses of the Holy Book and the Traditions of the Infallibles of the Prophet's Family, he has delivered as many as thirty-five lectures on the intricate subject. He has elucidated the five aspects of Isti'adha, namely piety or taqwa, Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) or Dhikr, resignation on the wishes of Allah (S.w.T.) or .Tawakkul, honesty of purpose or Ikhlas and humility in supplication or Tadarrau

The Ayatullah's discourses on these topics are highly illuminating and interesting

for those who peruse them. To support his arguments, the author referred to the Verses, Traditions and tales with great skill. He has presented the facts in a very lucid language that the readers of all intellectual levels understand what he has conveyed .to them

The fact that has to be recognized is that the Ayatullah was the people's guide (Marja' at-Taqlid) in his lifetime and therefore the world mourned him at the time of his martyrdom and thereafter too. The great works of the martyred Ayatullah are like the petals of a fragrant flower. These publications people have been buying for .themselves and to gift to friends for deriving benefit from their reading

The Martyr was himself a true practitioner of Isti'adha. Throughout his life he struggled against the baser instincts (nafs al-ammara) and to practice self- denial. This struggle of his was against the machinations of Satan. In this struggle he was victorious. Therefore he introduces Satan to his audiences in a very lucid and effective manner. He gives to the audience the ways of protecting themselves and seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s Help to this end. The talks in this compendium are studded with thought provoking references. They are so interesting that the narrative retains the interest of the reader throughout the narrative and doesn't tire them for a while! The !interest increases as one makes progress with the reading

I remember that once when an offset technician was photographing one of the .Ayatullah's books, he got engrossed in reading the contents

He has himself confessed that he was lost so much in reading the book that he forgot that the time for the closure of the studio that day had already come. Throughout the day he had not photographed even a page of the book! He said that on later days too, many a time he got engrossed in the contents of the book during the process of .photographing it

O Allah (S.w.T.)! Keep the Martyr's spirit under the shadow of Your Munificence and !also bless the spirit of his grandson with those of other martyrs

Sayyid Muhammad Hashim Dastaghaib

۰۵-۱۲-۱۳۶۰

۲۴-۰۲-۱۹۸۲

The First Talk

The Importance of Isti'adha in the Qur'an and the Traditions

The topic that has received the maximum attention in the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (S) and his Vicegerents (a.s.) is Isti'adha or seeking Allah .(S.w.T.)'s help to protect one against the manoeuvrings of Satan

This is done by saying the words audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem. But it is necessary that one should seek this protection from the depths of one's heart. That is .true Isti'adha

:To highlight the importance of Isti'adha, Allah (S.w.T.) says in the Holy Book

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

So when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaitan. ((Sura an-Nahl, ۱۶:۹۸

During a prayer, it is mandated, that after saying the takbirat al-ihraam (Allahu Akbar)

one should say the Isti'adha in a low tone. The commentators are of opinion that the Isti'adha in this situation has to be in a low tone because it will be like the person

p: ۴

wishing to keep himself hidden and at the same time escape from the machinations of the enemy (Satan)! The pointer is towards the fact that the supplicant should seek protection against his mortal enemy who is waiting for an opportunity to overpower him. This is done best by quietly tapping the door of the Great Place of Succor!

Isti'adha before commencing a Prayer

One most important time for Isti'adha is the moment of commencement of a prayer. Whenever a person has to offer prayer to Allah (S.w.T.), he should seek protection from Him against Iblīs who is always bent on misguiding and taking him astray from the right path. Iblīs makes his utmost efforts to destroy the good deeds of the human being that he is deprived of the rewards that he might earn. At least, Iblīs or Satan tries to make the person proud or deceitful about prayers.

For example, if one wishes to do the ablutions, he must do the Isti'adha before commencing to do it by asking for Allah (S.w.T.)'s Protection against the accursed Satan. The ablution should be done only after doing Isti'adha. You must have noticed that many a time the same ablution becomes Satan's area of operation that he puts many lurking fears or temptations in the mind of the person that make his entire prayer null and void.

Therefore, Isti'adha is one of the most important aspects of prayer that has to be performed in the truest sense, and implicitly, that Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection from the accursed Satan is assured.

Absolute necessity of Isti'adha in permissible affairs

In permissible

mustahab), or day-to-day, affairs like eating food, drinking water or wearing the) clothes, Isti'adha is mandated. For example, at the time of wearing the clothes one :should recite

Allahummas-stur awrati wa laa taj'al ash-shaitan lahu naseeba

O Allah! Keep my private parts hidden and save them from the interference of) (shaitan

In every situation, however lowly and futile, or elevated and likeable, one should seek protection from Satan. While entering into the mosque, one should do the Isti'adha lest the persistent Satan chases you even at that threshold! Even while going to a :washroom it is required to do the Isti'adha as follows

Allahumma inni audhu bika minal khabeesil khabs ar-rijs al-khabs ash-shaitanir rajeem

(O Allah I seek Your Protection from the accursed Satan and the defiled impurities)

Satan at the Threshold of the Mosque

One pious person said that he noticed Satan, in apocalyptic revelation, standing at the threshold of the mosque. He asked him "O accursed one! What are you doing here?" Satan replied, "Some of my associates have been missed in these environs and I am waiting for them!" The pious person understood that they must be intelligent persons who have gone into the mosque and the accursed Satan was unable to follow them inside. They must have taken care to say the Isti'adha before entering the .mosque

Reciting the Isti'adha before starting out of one's House

Isti'adha is absolutely essential when one is going out of the residence. At that time Satan awaits for the person outside. One should do the Isti'adha and recite the :following supplication at the moment of emerging out of the house

billahi tawakkaltu ‘alal laahi wa la hawla wa la quwawata illa billaah

In the name of Allah (S.w.T.) and with His Help; I believe in Allah and place my trust in) (Him. And there is no power besides Him

:In the Holy Qur’an it is said with great emphasis that

إِنَّهُ يَرَاكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لاَ تَرَوْنَهُمْ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاء لِلَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

He (shaitan) surely sees you, he as well as his host, from whence you cannot see them; surely We have made the shaitans to be the guardians of those who do not (believe. (Sura al-A’raaf, ٧:٢٧

Only one thing can save you from Satan the accursed. That is Isti’adha. Besides Allah (S.w.T.)’s Protection there is no way of saving oneself from the tricks and deceptions .of Satan

The Prophet of Islam (S) exhorted by Allah (S.w.T.) to do Isti’adha

Man wishes to have access to the Presence of Allah (S.w.T.), but Satan tries his best to prevent him from achieving this end. He puts so many hurdles and impediments in the way of men that it becomes impossible to reach the desired destination. The one and .only way of precluding this risk is to seek Allah (S.w.T.)’s protection against Satan

:(Allah (S.w.T.) has ordered the Prophet (S

وَقُل رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ

And say: O my Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from the evil suggestions of the Shaitans; (and I seek refuge in Thee! O my Lord from their presence. (Sura al-Muminun, ٢٣:٩٧-٨

:Similarly elsewhere in the Qur’an, Allah (S.w.T.) says

مِن شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ

Say I seek refuge from the

(evil of the whisperings of the slinking (Shaitan). (Sura an-Naas, ۱۱۴:۴

Therefore when the enemy is so powerful and strong, we should not be complacent and unmindful of him. We should gather all our faculties and plan to save ourselves by seeking the Protection of Allah (S.w.T.). Otherwise, one would find to his surprise that the place where he was prostrating himself for long was, in fact, Satan's abode and in his ignorance he thought that he was prostrating to god. When, in such a situation, he uttered 'O god!" in actual fact he had been submitting himself to Satan!

Worshipping Satan the whole Life

An incident is narrated in Muntakhab al-Tawareekh. My mentor, Ustadh 'Ali al-Haeri, told in one of his lectures, "In a village of the Isfahan province a rustic villager was in the last throes of his life. The pious person of the village was requested to say the talqeen, or pronounce the creed to the dying person to repeat it. During the talqeen when the sick person said la ilaha illa Allah to bear witness to the Unity of Allah (S.w.T.), from a corner of the room a sound came - Sadaqat 'abdi – 'My creature says the truth!' When the sick man said, 'Ya Allah - O God!' Then again the sound came from the same corner of the room, 'labbayk 'abdi'- 'My creature I am here!' The pious person asked, 'Who are you that calls?' The reply was, 'I am the one whom this person had worshipped all his life! I

'!am Satan

Yes! It is a fact that the man worshipped Satan his entire life. He was always responding to the call of Satan. His tongue spoke at Satan's orders. His eyes saw things in response to Satan's wishes. His heart responded to Satan's wishes. When throughout his life the person was at the beck and call of Satan, then at the time of the talqeen whether he said 'Ya Rabb' or 'Ya Iblīs' his respondent can only be Satan. Even if the curtains got raised in the person's last moments, and he was repentant, !even then he would get only disappointment! Of what use will be this repentance

O believers! Try to be steadfast in doing the Isti'adha. Don't underestimate your enemy, Satan! Don't be under the illusion that only repeating the words 'Audhu billahi minash-shaitanir rajeem' is sufficient. Remember! Unless you understand the purport of these words and mould your actions as per the Commandments of Allah (S.w.T.), .the Isti'adha will not be of any utility

Isti'adha during the execution of Justice (Qadhawat), when in privacy with non-Mahram and while in a frenzy of anger

In the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt, particular attention is drawn for Isti'adha in the :following delicate situations

Qadawat: The qadi or judge has to say the Isti'adha when he adjudicates a case and .gives his judgment

Khalwat ba na-mahram: When a person is alone with a stranger from the opposite gender (such as a man with a young woman), it is imperative that he seeks Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection from Satan (Isti'adha) because in such a situation the accursed Satan makes his utmost effort to lead

.the person astray

Frenzy of anger: When a person is in a frenzy of anger, his blood boils and Satan dominates him with full force. Because Satan is created fiery and subtle (latīf), he enters into the person of the man with great stealth. We quote here the example of Hadrat Nuh (a.s.) to explain our point. Satan says, 'In his frenzy of anger a man for me is like a ball in a child's hand!' You must have seen that a child throws the ball whichever way he wants, wherever he wants! In the same Satan overpowers men in frenzy of anger and makes them commit prohibited (Haram) acts. There is no wonder if Satan makes persons commit acts of kufr (infidelity) in a frenzy of anger! Only those lucky persons escape from such situations that have Allah (S.w.T.)'s particular .Blessing because they say the Isti'adha in such situations

The Second Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

وَقُل رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِکَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ

And say: O my Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from the evil suggestions of the Shaitans. ((Sura al-Muminun, ٢٣:٩٧

To summarize the last talk, believers must give importance to Isti'adha and, in accordance with the Nass al-Qur'ani (the categorical Qur'anic Injunction), in all conditions, seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s Protection from the machinations of Satan. Satan, and his ilk, has never left man to his own scruples, nor will they ever do it. They always .strive to prevent man from doing any good deed

.Whenever man tries to do good, they create impediments in his efforts

In certain circumstances the efforts of the satanic forces are redoubled. These situations are when one delivers justice, when one is alone with a young strange woman and at the moment when a person is in a rage of anger. As illustrated in the previous talk, Satan tries all forms of deceptions to destroy the human being.

Satan's Trap or Bait

This evening we shall consider three good deeds of men that Satan makes the best efforts to nullify. They are:

Ahad : Promises or resolutions

Nadhr : Or offerings

Sadaqa : Or charity

When a person resolves to Allah (S.w.T.) for performing a certain act and to give a nadhr (offering) after its fulfillment in accordance with the norms of fiqh, Satan tries all the deceptions at his command to prevent him from offering the promised nadhr!

Similarly when one wants to give a sadaqa in Allah (S.w.T.)'s way, Satan tries his level best to prevent the person from giving it. It has been oft recorded that when a person puts his hand in his pocket then Satan, and his numerous retainers, cling to the person's hand and put all sorts of fears in his mind. As the Holy Qur'an warns:

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاء

Shaitan threatens you with poverty and enjoins on you lewdness. (Sura al-Baqara, ٢:٢٦٨)

They will put a fear in the mind of the person that after doing the charity he will be left with nothing and render him penurious. Sometimes they put

a fear in the mind of the person that after doing the charity if he gets some urgent need for personal expense, then from where he will get help! Therefore they .(.persuade the person to refrain from giving charity in the way of Allah (S.w.T

Don’t brag after giving charity

And, despite everything, after one has given in charity, then Satan tries his level best to render the good deed null and void and thus the person doesn’t qualify to get reward for the good turn. To achieve this end, Satan would use all his skills to persuade the person to publicly brag about his charitable act. For example, Satan will put in the mind of the person to tell to the beneficiary of the charity, ‘It was I who came to your rescue in time of need! None else would have helped you!’ Or Satan would make him belittle the receiver of the charity by saying, ‘Take this money now. ”!But please don’t come to me for help again

:Therefore, Allah (S.w.T.) categorically says in the Holy Qur’an

لاَ تُبْطِلُواْ صَدَقَاتِكُم بِالْمَنِّ وَالأذَى

(Do not make your charity worthless by reproach and injury. (Sura al-Baqara, ۲:۲۶۴

In a nutshell, Satan is a mortal enemy of men and always schemes to make their good !turns go in vain. Therefore, they too have to render Satan’s mean efforts ineffective

Satan sets his sight on the hearts of people

In all commentaries, and particularly in Majma al-Bayan, it is narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) that Satan always has an eye on the heart of a believer. When he finds the person

busy in prayer, he flees. The Prophet (S) has said, 'Satan has put a halter on the hearts of men. But when man remembers Allah (S.w.T.), Satan escapes from him. When a person ignores remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.), Satan would swallow his heart.' 'Satan plans to swallow the heart of a believer. But when the believer remembers Allah '.(S.w.T.), Satan runs away from him

Satan chases a person till the end. This subject has received great importance in the Holy Book. Allah (S.w.T.) takes an oath from man that he will not become a follower of :Satan. In clear terms Allah (S.w.T.) has described Satan as the sworn enemy of man

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِى آدَمَ أَن لَّا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! that you should not serve the Shaitan? (Surely he is your open enemy. (Sura Ya Sin, ۳۶:۶۰

Allah (S.w.T.) has thus forbidden man not to befriend, Satan, his enemy since creation .and warned from becoming his follower

?What is Satan? Why he has been Created

point

Two topics have always been the subjects of discussion- what is Satan and what is the purpose of his creation? Also, what could be the strategy to save oneself from his machinations and to dispel the fears that Satan creates in the hearts of human beings. These topics need discussion at length, the dissertations on the topics are neither comprehensible for the layman nor are necessary for him. Therefore, they are dealt here in brief to give the basic understanding to the common

.man

What is the use of knowing about Satan

Researchers are of opinion that if there is fear of a housebreak in a neighborhood, then the person with good commonsense would look for as many persons as possible to confront the brigands. He will also ensure that the doors and windows are securely locked from inside the house. He will place suitable hurdles on the way by which the burglars might access the house. But, to the contrary, if the person spends lot of time in investigating about the brigands about their numbers instead of fortifying his place, .it might become too late to meet their assault

Therefore, what is necessary for you is to find the ways of guarding against Satan. Trying to find out about his creation, his ways of creating fears in the human beings would be a purposeless exercise. The duty of a person is to guard against Satan in all .events

Now that the Mukhbir as-Sadiq (the Truthful Messenger) has informed that Satan is the sworn enemy of the humans since creation of man, you should not waste time in .futile talk and, instead, search for ways of warding him away

However, since these questions about Satan are oft repeated, the matter is dealt :here in brief

Satan has been created with fire and he is a rare creature

Although man is made of the four elements - fire, water, soil and air - but the content of soil is prominent in his make-up. This gives volume and weight to the human body. .Therefore the power of comprehension and action in a human being are limited

Contrary to this, Satan

is made of fire, with the fire and air being predominant components in his make-up. Therefore Satan is absolutely subtle (latif) and light and, therefore, has a very wide .range of actions and mobility in his control

Man thinks that he has great faculties at his command but Satan has such incredible capabilities that he can become so small as to easily pass through a tiny crevice. He can also become so huge as to entirely encompass a vast place! The distances that a man can travel over a month with difficulty, Satan can traverse in the time taken to blink the eyes once! The heavy weights that man is incapable of lifting, Satan can lift !effortlessly

In Sura an-Naml Allah (S.w.T.) has made a reference towards this fact while narrating :the story of Hadrat Sulaiman (a.s.) the throne of Bilqees

قَالَ عِفْريتٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيکَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَن تَقُومَ مِن مَّقَامِکَ وَإِنِّی عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِیٌّ أَمِينٌ

One audacious among the jinn said: I will bring it to you before you rise up from your (place; and most surely I am strong (and) trusty for it. (Sura an-Naml, ۲۷:۳۹

Satan can see us

There is an objection that if Satan exists, then why men are unable to see him? This is an invalid objection. Human eyes cannot see rare things. They can only visualize things that have volume. Can we see the air that is absolutely rare? Can we see the waves of the wind, although we feel them blowing. The human eye is made of soil and it

:can only see the voluminous things. Therefore the Holy Qur'an says

إِنَّهُ يَرَاكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ

he (shaitan) surely sees you, he as well as his host, from whence you cannot see (them. (Sura al-A'raaf, ٧:٢٧

Yes! At certain times the satans can make themselves visible to people. Many prophets such as Hadrat Nuh (a.s.), Hadrat Yahya (a.s.), Hadrat Muhammad (a.s.) and many men of high piety have seen Satan and even now some pious persons must be .there who have this experience

The creation of Satan and the felicity of Man

As far as the purpose for Satan's creation, the Omnipotent Allah (S.w.T.) creates whatever He desires to. The raison d'être (hikmat) for creation of Satan requires a detailed discussion that will be out of place here. But, in a nutshell, the creation of Satan (and his ilk) is to test the felicity of the human beings. When men ward away the deceptions of Satan, they ear a place in the Heaven and those who are misled by him, !will be Hell bound

Allah (S.w.T.) has ordered men to do charity. Satan asked people not to do charity lest their horde of wealth diminishes! Those who have wisdom and strong faith snub :Satan and tell him,' Allah (S.w.T.) says

وَمَا أَنفَقْتُم مِّن شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

And whatever thing you spend, He exceeds it in reward, and He is the best of (Sustainers. (Sura Saba, ٣۴:٣٩

If you are steadfast in determination and patience like a mountain, then wisdom and knowledge will take you to such a place that it becomes

evident if you were irresolute, the Satanic fears would sway your feet! It is the existence of Satan that proves the felicity of men of piety and wisdom who are steadfast despite all the stratagems of the accursed one!

The purpose to create Satan is to put Man to test

We all talk of Allah (S.w.T.) and the Day of Judgment. But do we really have a strong faith is a moot question! It is only Satan (and his ilk) that is a touchstone for testing the humans.

If you take Allah (S.w.T.)'s name with implicit faith, then why you don't have confidence in His promises. If, unfortunately, you have accepted the fears that Satan has put in you mind, then you will be rendered a mu'min only in the namesake. If you have a strong belief in the existence of the Heaven, then why you don't make a sincere effort to earn a place in it! Why don't you try to avoid going to the Hell as Retribution for the evil deeds committed under the spell of Satan!

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّن سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يُؤْمِنُ بِالْآخِرَهِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِی شَکٍّ

And he has no authority over them, but that We may distinguish him who believes in the hereafter from him who is in doubt concerning it; and your Lord is the Preserver of all things. (Sura Saba, ۳۴:۲۱)

You see that a particular lady has claims of piety. Satan approaches her in the garb of a human being and says, 'Madam! You have become old-fashioned and retrograde! You have covered

yourself in such a clumsy chadar (shawl)'. When you happen to see the lady a second time, she will not look much different from gentlemen! Satan creates such doubts, .fears and changes in the human beings

Definitely, the purpose of the creation of Satan is to test the human beings as to their determination to be steadfast on the right path. Those who are fickle minded and susceptible to be led astray by Satan are also tested by Satan! Thus Allah (S.w.T.) gets .(a proof of who is mu'min (believer) and who is fajir (immoral

Allah (S.w.T.)'s promise and Satan's promise

It is a human failing that man gives more credence to Satan's promises. Satan prevents him from spending in the way of Allah (S.w.T.) by creating unfounded fears in his heart. The thought is generated in the man's mind that what he would do if a more important need for expenditure arises soon and he would be without the money that .he was giving for the good cause now

But man forgets Allah (S.w.T.)'s promise and goes back on spending on good causes. He remains in the service of Satan and is carried away, spending huge amounts for name and fame, hearing his name mentioned on the radio, television and the !newspapers

When Allah (S.w.T.) exhorts people to be kind to their poor neighbors, needy relatives and to help them monetarily, they make an excuse that their financial status doesn't permit doing any such charity. But when Satan dictates about expense on worldly activities, they spend without

!giving a second thought

Allah (S.w.T.)'s call and the call of Satan

Satan has been created with the sole purpose of testing the human beings. He encourages opening of cinema houses and trains satanic men and entangles the two-legged animals in his bait.

Doesn't the call of 'Hayya 'alal falaah' (come for the good act) emanate from the mosque in the vicinity of cinema halls at the time of Maghrib Prayer? These two situations are in the immediate neighborhood of each other to test the people as to !who are righteous and who are going astray

Who knows The Day of Reckoning might be tomorrow! For that Day the right to get !Reward and Retribution is being earned by men today

Satan never thrusts his will on people forcibly

Satan can never force anyone to do misdeeds. He has no such faculties. He can only operate through creating doubts in the minds of persons and tempting them to go :astray with his deceptions. Satan says

وَمَا كَانَ لِيَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن سُلْطَانٍ

(And I had no authority over you... (Sura Ibrahim, ۱۴:۲۲

Satan's job is only to create doubts and fears in the human mind. If a person goes to the mosque, it is with his own conviction and decision. When he goes to the cinema theatre, it is his own choice and decision. It is the fault of the man who is tempted by Satan to make decisions that make him a sinner. On the Day of Judgment when people surround Satan and blame him for leading them astray, he will give a simple and clear reply that he did not

drag them into the Hell. They had themselves decided to act the way they did! Satan would then ask men to curse themselves rather than cursing him!

وَمَا كَانَ لِيَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن سُلْطَانٍ إِلاَّ أَن دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلاَ تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُواْ أَنفُسَكُم

And I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you obeyed me, therefore do not blame me but blame yourselves. (Sura Ibrahim, ١٤:٢٢)

The Third Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

وَقُل رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ

And say: O my Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from the evil suggestions of the Shaitans; And I seek refuge in Thee! O my Lord from their presence. (Sura al-Muminun, ٢٣:٩٧-٨)

The jealous nature of Iblīs

Because of his jealous nature, Iblīs has been exiled from the Heaven. He cannot bear man, whom he thought inferior in comparison to himself, attaining nearness to Allah (S.w.T.). Satan has expressed to Allah (S.w.T.), 'You have made me with fire and have created Adam (a.s.) with soil. Fire is superior to soil and your ordering me to prostrate before Adam (a.s.) is gross injustice!'

Despite all this, man reaches august position and Satan has been repudiated by Allah (S.w.T.) thus, 'Get away from here! You are inferior and contemptible. You have no right to brag about your superiority here!'

The human being wishes to achieve nearness to the Creator through prayer. But Satan tries with all his faculties and stratagems to create hurdles in the way of the

person’s progress

p: ٢٠

towards the goal. This he does to satisfy his instinct of jealousy. Satan is such an accursed creature that if he is unable to cause major impediments to the efforts of the person, he will satisfy himself even with small disturbances to the man. For example, if Satan is unable to turn a person into an infidel or hypocrite, he will satisfy himself with making the person commit lesser sins.

Jealousy and pride have nothing to do with Heaven

Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) says in the Sermon of Qaasiya quoted in the Nahj al-Balaagha:

"O people! Satan has rendered himself accursed because of his jealousy. Beware, you too might get involved in jealousy meet the same fate as Satan. Allah (S.w.T.) banished Satan from the Heaven because of his jealousy. He earned the displeasure and ire of Allah (S.w.T.) because of his pride and jealousy. How will you expect to achieve Heaven if you too are proud and jealous! When the mentor of the angels, Iblīs, was sent out of the Heaven because of his pride and jealousy, how can ordinary mortals like you dream of entering the Heaven if they practice these undesirable traits."

Satan was busy supplicating to Allah (S.w.T.) for long years but for one act of pride he earned the displeasure of Allah (S.w.T.) to be banished from the Heaven for all time. It must be remembered, therefore, that pride and greatness is only for Allah (S.w.T.)! Allah (S.w.T.) says, 'Magnificence and Greatness only suit Me! You humans! What use your bragging? Conceit and pride are

not your raiment. Talking big doesn’t suit you. All men in the eyes of Allah (S.w.T.) are beggars and needy. Allah (S.w.T.) says, ‘Worship Me that there is no god other than ’!Me

!If man becomes proud and conceited, he will become a partner of Satan

The Wish of Iblis Fulfilled

It is narrated that when Satan was ordered out of the Heaven, he submitted to Allah :(S.w.T.) in the following manner

O Allah (S.w.T.)! What has happened to my supplications offered over a long span of‘ ’?seven thousand years

Allah (S.w.T.) replied, ‘We shall reward you what you ask for as a compensation for ’.your prayers

’.Satan said, ‘O Allah (S.w.T.)! Give me respite till the Day of Judgment

’!Allah (S.w.T.) replied, ‘You are given the respite

Satan said, ‘My second wish is that I am given the faculty to create doubts and fears ’.in the hearts of the human beings

This wish of Satan too was also granted. In granting this wish Allah (S.w.T.) had a .strategy in view

Hadrat Adam (a.s.) beseeched Allah (S.w.T.) thus, ‘O Creator! You have not only provided respite to this formidable enemy of my progeny till the Day of Judgment, you have also given him faculty to cause fears and temptations in the hearts of poor !progeny! They will be helpless at the mercy of Satan

Allah (S.w.T.) said, ‘O Adam (a.s.)! Don’t be disturbed! With every Satan there will be an angel created by us. These angels will help your progeny to guard against the trap set ’.by Satan

(Angels too have Power of Inspiration (Ilhām

Whenever Satan creates doubts in the

p: ٢٢

hearts of men, the angels inspire virtue in their heart. Satan says, 'Don't go to the mosque!' The angel encourages the person to go there. Satan encourages the person to commit certain sins that he can make reparation later on. The angel says that the person might die before he expresses his repentance for the sins. And even if he .(.expresses repentance there is no guarantee of acceptance by Allah (S.w.T

Give attention to your own hearts! Whether there are thoughts of good or of evil in your heart, you will always have doubts about these thoughts! When Satan upbraids you to commit a sinful act, the angels guide you against it. If Satan tries to prevent .you from doing a good turn, the angels encourage you to go ahead with it

At the Cross-roads

Man is therefore at the cross-roads! Either he loses himself in the valley of greed and vanity or is guided by the angels to the path of virtue and salvation. Allah (S.w.T.) has created man with the faculty of making his own decisions for his actions. Allah (S.w.T.) ,has categorically said in the Holy Qur'an

فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذَنبِهِ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ أَغْرَقْنَا وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

and it did not beseem Allah that He should be unjust to them, but they were unjust to... (their own souls. (Sura al... ´Ankabut, ۲۹:۴۰

The door for repentance is always open

Allah (S.w.T.) has further said, 'If We had imposed Iblīs over your progeny

and has given him respite till the Day of Reckoning, we have kept the doors of repentance open for you progeny too'. If men are caught in the web of the accursed Satan, they can express repentance like their ancestor, Adam (a.s.) and seek forgiveness from Allah (S.w.T.). Remember that Adam (a.s.) after doing repentance reached the august status of Prophet-hood and was one of the choicest of Allah :(S.w.T.). Allah (S.w.T.) says

إِنَّ اللّهَ اصْطَفَى آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

Surely Allah chose Adam and Nuh and the descendants of Ibrahim and the (descendants of Imran above the nations (Sura Aal-´Imran, ٣:٣٣

Repentant men too can achieve the status of tawwabeen (penitents) and become the :dear ones of Allah (S.w.T.). Allah (S.w.T.), as such says

إِنَّ اللّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ

(surely Allah loves the penitent. (Sura al-Baqara, ٢:٢٢٢...

Allah (S.w.T.)'s blessing is for men till the end

All the people of the previous epochs had the doors of repentance open for them. But the conditions for acceptance of their penitence were very severe. It is the felicity of the presence of the Last of Prophets (a.s.) that his people, who are called the Ummat al-Marhooma (The Nation Dealt with Mercy), have a very wide door for repentance available to them. This concession is because their Prophet (S) is Rahmat lil Aalameen (A Mercy for All the Worlds) and Tauba, and its acceptance, too is one of the aspects .of blessing

Bihar al-Anwār, volume three, quotes a tradition of the Prophet (S)," Every person who repents for his past sins one year before his

death, will be pardoned." Then said, "One year is too long a period. If a person repents for his sins a month before his death, he may be pardoned." The Prophet (S) further added, "One month too is rather a long period. If the person repents a day prior to his death, his sins might be pardoned." The Prophet (S) then said, "A day too is a long time. If the person repents at the moment of death, in the Barzakh (the Purgatory) or before Izrael looks into his eyes, the person might be pardoned by Allah (S.w.T.)." It proves that if a Muslim repents even while he is dying, he stands a chance of getting .pardoned for his sins

Blessed is the heart that is busy in the Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.). Can the Blessing be more encompassing than what the Ummat al-Marhooma has been endowed with. Despite the evil presence of Satan and his temptations to men to !commit sins, Allah (S.w.T.)'s Blessings are unfathomable

Hasan Basri asks a question and Imam Zayn al-Abidīn (a.s.) replies

:It is narrated that once during the Hajj Hasan Basri said

?Al-'ajab kul al-ajab, man najaa kaifa najaa

?The most amazing thing is the one who gets saved; how does he get saved

.It is very surprising that man escapes from the clutches of the powerful Iblīs

:This talk of Hasan Basri reached Imam Zayn al-Abidīn (a.s.) He said

?Al-'ajab kul al-ajab, man halaka kaifa halaka

?The most amazing thing is the one who gets ruined; how does he get ruined

It is surprising that the unlucky person was deprived of the

".all pervading Blessing of Allah (S.w.T.) that spreads over the entire Universe

Illness before death is a blessing

After spending a long life the time for departure has come nigh. Perhaps it is the kindness of Allah (S.w.T.) that men get afflicted with disease and remain in this stage for some time before death. In this time they prepare themselves to meet their Creator. This is, perhaps, the reason that sudden deaths are considered a calamity. One who remains in the deathbed for a period, say a month, and doesn't awake to the fact and forgets to express penitence for his past sins before dying will be a very .unfortunate person

The Fourth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

وَقُل رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ

Say thou: 'O my Lord! I seek refuge unto Thee from the (evil) promptings of the satans! I seek refuge unto Thee O my Lord from their access to me. (Sura al-(Muminun, ٢٣:٩٧-٩٨

[The only way to safety from Satan is Isti'adha

The fears and hardships that man faces on account of Satan are not hidden from anyone. Everyone knows that Satan is the worst enemy of human beings. He doesn't leave the men alone till their last breath. His only purpose in the world is to see that man doesn't profess faith on Allah (S.w.T.) and the Hereafter. At least, Satan makes every effort to ensure that men veer away from doing good deeds and get attracted

.to evil acts

The most important thing is that men make every effort to get rid

p: ۲۶

of Satan and his ilk. But to get rid of such powerful and organized group of enemies is not an easy task. The Holy Qur'an prescribes the one and only remedy for the situation, is Isti'adha. There are clear indications in the Book saying, "Fastaidh billah" (So seek refuge with Allah!), because it is not possible to reach the Truth without doing .this

The King's tent and the ferocious watch-dog

I had cited an example that Satan is like a ferocious dog that lingers at the entrance to the king's tent. Whenever anyone tries to go to the presence of the king, the dog rushes at him with gnawing teeth. This is such a mean janitor that barring the close friends of the king, none other is safe. Only Allah (S.w.T.)'s favorites can reach Him without let or hindrance from this enemy. Anyway, to enter the king's tent we shall have to seek protection from him from the evil dog. There is no other way than seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s help and protection from the accursed Satan to achieve His .nearness! Only Allah (S.w.T.)'s fury can contain the accursed Satan

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection that with His attention one can get protection from the mischief of Satan. In this regard the Holy :Qur'an says

وَقُل رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِکَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعُوذُ بِکَ رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ

And say: 'O my Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from the evil suggestions of the Shaitans; '.And I seek refuge in Thee! O my Lord from their presence

(Sura al-Muminun, ۲۳:۹۷-۹۸)

Particularly in privacy and loneliness, saving oneself from the fears and temptations created by Satan is rather difficult. In such a situation one must call:

Ya Ghiyath al-mustaghitheen

Ya Malaadh al-laaedheen

O listener of the plaint of the plaintiff

O provider of succor to the refuge seeker!

‘Save me from the machinations of Satan.’ If there is no protection of Allah (S.w.T.), one cannot save himself from the onslaught of Satan’s deceptions.

Isti’adha should emanate from the heart and not merely from the lips

To gauge the reality of Isti’adha, only saying audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem or saying its translation in one’s own language is absolutely insufficient. Isti’adha is a meaningful and spiritual condition that is conveyed by the words noted above. If Isti’adha is prompted from the heart of the person, then only it will be effective. Otherwise, just uttering the words would make one the play-thing of Satan.

The three types of Isti’adha

There are three ways the Isti’adha is done:

There are persons who neither have the right spirit of doing Isti’adha nor are they aware of the meaning of the words of Isti’adha. But, all the same, as a force of habit, they utter the words: audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem. Unless the Isti’adha comes with feelings, understanding and from the heart, it becomes a satanic joke!

There are persons who know the meanings and purport of the words of Isti’adha and are capable of saying them properly, but they haven’t the right feelings in their heart and also their actions are in obedience of Satan. Such Isti’adha will be for Satan rather than a submission to Allah

!S.w.T.) for His protection against Satan)

There is a third group of persons who say the words of Isti'adha from the depths of their hearts and are fully aware of their meaning, purport and spirit. These persons will be fully aware of the Greatness and Omnipotence of Allah (S.w.T.). The Isti'adha of .(.these persons will always get the accepted by Allah (S.w.T

Seeking protection in Allah (S.w.T.)'s obedience

The deity of the sinners and Allah (S.w.T.)'s disobedient persons is always Satan. Such persons might curse Satan a thousand times to make a hypocritical show to others. To put the matter in more precise words, such persons outwardly say 'audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem (I seek refuge with Allah from the cursed shaytan) but their character is such that they make false allegations against others, use abusive language, trifle with the self-respect of others and reveal others' confidences. Such persons don't refrain from committing any minor or major sin and all the same utter the words of Isti'adha! In practice their Isti'adha becomes 'audhu bish-shaitan min ar-Rahman, that would mean seeking protection of Satan to escape from Allah (S.w.T.) (na'udhu billah!!). On the lips of such persons are the words that in obedience to Allah (S.w.T.) they are seeking His protection, but their actions are all contrary to His Commandments. When the curtains of ignorance are raised from the hearts of such persons, they realize that all the time it was Satan who prompted them to utter the !words audhu billah to ridicule their weak faith

A satanic book to refute Satan

It is said

that a scholar of some repute thought of writing a book to warn the people about the treacherous and mean acts of Satan. During the same period a pious person met Satan in a state of apocalyptic revelation. He told to Satan, "O accursed creature! The time has come for your exposure! Such-and-such a maulana is very soon writing a book about your nefarious acts!" Satan smiled derisively and said, "You are involved in a misunderstanding! This book is being written at my suggestion!" The pious person asked, "How is it possible?" Satan replied, "I had put doubts in the heart of the scholar that he is a person of high repute and he should make a show of his erudition. The person doesn't realize that although he has titled the book as 'Refutation of Satan', but his real intent is to make a show of his erudition and achieve name and fame!"

In this way Satan tempts people to curse him and make them involuntarily utter "aaudhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem."

Politics of the imperialist forces

The imperialist regimes maintain their agents in their settlements who are their instruments for attainment of the imperialistic ends. At certain times, for the sake of their political compulsions, they instruct the agents to criticize and abuse them, their imperialistic masters! All this is done as a camouflage for their nefarious political reality.

How wonderful is Satan's politics! He has the distinction of being the first politician ever! Satan can no doubt be called the mentor and leader of politicians

of all times. Politics, in other words, means working behind the backs of the people. Satan, in this way, fools everyone and doesn't leave behind any footprints. The evil acts are committed by people at Satan's provocation, but they never realize that he is !behind their actions

Isti'adha is for escape from sins

O Allah! Give us courage to keep away from Satan, prevent ourselves from sinning" and avoid committing crimes." This Isti'adha with Allah (S.w.T.) keeps us away from sins and reins our tongues from abusive and harmful talk. Instead of using abusive language in anger, we should rather say audhu billa at such times of provocation! It is always advisable to seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection and help against the machinations :of Satan. In other words, the meaning of audhu billah is

audhu bi ta'a-at illah min ta'-at ish-shaitan

I seek refuge in the obedience to Allah (S.w.T.) from the obedience to Satan

Keeping the hand in the tiger's mouth and trying to escape from it with one's feet

If a person keeps his hands in the mouth of a tiger and cries that he is very scared of the tiger and seeks the safety of an invincible fort to save himself from the animal attacking him! This is like the person who keeps crying for protection from Satan but .is, in fact, submissive to and under his evil spell

As long as a person uses foul language, he is the follower and slave of Satan. In this condition his cursing Satan will be a stark lie. One should seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s !forgiveness (istighfar) for the Isti'adha that he had done hypocritically

The Isti'adha of a foul-mouthed

person, in the eyes of Gnostics (‘Urafa) is tantamount to saying audhubish-shaitan, because he sometimes says audhu and at others la hawla…, but his actions prove his .falsehood

If a tiger is chasing you, you will try to run into a fortified place of safety rather than going near it and putting your hands into its mouth and keep shouting for help. Similar is the reality of Isti’adha. It is seeking Allah (S.w.T.)’s succor against Satan in His !strong fortification

A true dream and Satan’s treachery

A disciple of Shaikh Ansari has said that when he was studying under him, one night he saw the accursed Satan in a dream. Satan was carrying some bridles in his hand. He asked Satan, “why are you holding these bridles in your hand?’ He replied, “I put them in the necks of people and drag them! Yesterday I put a bridle around the neck of one Shaikh Murtada Ansari and dragged him out of his house into the lane. But he ”!escaped from me from the middle of the lane and returned home

When he awoke in the morning, he went to the Shaikh and related to him the dream. The Shaikh said, “Satan has told you the truth. The accursed one did try to tempt me with his glib talk. In fact, at home we needed certain things and I had no money handy at the time. I thought that from the Sahm e Imam I had with me a copy of the Holy Qur’an. I thought that I would

sell it and use the money for my need as a loan to be reimbursed later. I took the copy of the Qur'an and went into the lane. Whilst buying my needs a thought came to me why I was doing such a thing. I felt penitent, returned home and put back the copy of the Qur'an in its original place". (١)

Some other persons have related the same incident in the following manner:

When the Shaikh's disciple saw the bridles in the hands of Satan, he noticed that one of the bridles was very strong and thick. When he asked the accursed Satan the reason for his carrying the bridles, he replied that they were for putting around the necks of people and dragging them. The person also asked, "For what purpose is the stronger and thicker bridle?" Satan replied, "This is for your mentor, Shaikh Ansari. Yesterday I put it round his neck and dragged him into the bazār. But he managed to free himself and escaped." The person asked, "Which one of the bridles is for me?" Satan replied, "For you there is no need of a bridle. You can become my victim only with my sweet talk!"

The Fifth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see

١ - This incidence is quoted from the biography of the Shaikh Ansari, 'Seerat wa Shakhsiyat' pages ٨٨-٨٩.

(aright). (Sura al-A'raaf, ۷:۲۰۱)

The meaning should be manifested by the words

Isti'adha is one of the important one of the important aspects of the faith and is obligatory on every Muslim. As already been mentioned, earlier, it should be from the depths of the heart of the person and not just the repetition of the words through the mouth. Qur'an wants people to-fastaidh billah- seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection. This means that the words should not be repeated as a force of habit like the parrots. The reality requires one to seek freedom from the accursed Satan and submit to Allah (S.w.T.) for His help. If these two objectives are achieved, then the Isti'adha is really Isti'adha! Otherwise it will just be an exercise in futility. In a nutshell, when the words of the Isti'adha are uttered, it should be in the true spirit required of him.

When we consider carefully the spirit of Isti'adha, we find that it has five well-defined aspects:

۱. Taqwa or piety.

۲. Tadhakkur or remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.).

۳. Tawakkul or trust in Allah (S.w.T.).

۴. Ikhlas or sincerity.

۵. Aajizi or humility towards Allah (S.w.T.).

When a person practices all these five aspects, his Isti'adha will be accepted by Allah (S.w.T.). Then the accursed Satan will remain a long distance away from the person whether he says audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem or not. In other words, when Satan comes to a mu'min he becomes scared of man as an ordinary human being gets scared of the company of Jinns.

Satan runs away from the men of piety

The examples of aspects of Isti'adha are

.briefly explained from the Holy Qur’an

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They are (forthright. (Sura al-A’raaf, ۷:۲۰۱

When the men of piety have any fear from Satan, then they busy themselves in .prayer and they instantaneously get enlightened

Therefore, the very first condition for keeping oneself safe from form Satan is to become pious. Those who adopted piety, busy themselves in prayer whenever they fears of Satan in their hearts. They get enlightened that Satan created the fears. They also realize that Satan had fled because of their prayer and that they are in the protection of Allah (S.w.T.). The ayat mentioned above is a pointer to the believers .(.towards adoption of piety and remembrance of Allah (S.w.T

(.Need for trust on Allah (S.w.T

:Allah (S.w.T.) says in the Holy Qur’an

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

So when you recite the Qur’an, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaitan, Surely he has no authority over those who believe and rely on their Lord. (Sura (an…Nahl, ۱۶:۹۸-۹۹

One who has trust in Allah (S.w.T.), Shaitan will have no control on him. Satan can influence only those who don’t trust on Allah (S.w.T.) and all their confidence is on material and worldly aspects of their lives. If the same person has trust on Allah (S.w.T.), then Satan becomes helpless

.in his maneuvers

When a person doesn’t trust Allah (S.w.T.) from the depths of his heart, then all his pleadings for protection will be of no avail. According to the verse quoted above, Satan would gain ascendance over him. In the later verse of the Qur’an there is a :reference towards this aspect

إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ

Verily, his authority is only over those who befriend him and those who associate (others with Him. (Sura an-Nahl, ۱۶:۱۰۰

One who has forgotten the Munificent Allah (S.w.T.) and befriended Satan, he has no .concern for Isti’adha or seeking protection from Satan

Satan has nothing to do with the sincere people

Another important aspect of Isti’adha is sincerity. This saying of Satan is recorded in :the Holy Qur’an

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

He said: Then by Thy Might I will surely make them live an evil life, all, Except Thy (servants from among them, the purified ones. (Sura Sad, ۳۸:۸۲-۸۳

The purport of sincerity (Ikhlas) has been explained at various places in the Holy Qur’an. As the need arose, we have referred to this aspect in our talk and there is .further need to stress on this aspect

Thus it is established that the Isti’adha of only the persons sincere to Allah (S.w.T.) is appropriate. Since Satan has no influence on such persons they are those who escape .from his machinations

Do we have the capability of Piety (Taqwa) and Remembrance (Tadhakkur) of Allah ?(.(S.w.T

After living long years we have not drawn any benefit from knowledge of the Faith. May Allah (S.w.T.) protect us from compounded ignorance (Jahl al-Murakkab). We have earlier said that

the first aspect of Isti'adha is Taqwa or piety. One who has not adopted taqwa, will not be able to escape from Satan. Only with piety one can keep out of the clutches of .Satan

A woman who can come to the bazār wearing indecent dress is satanic from head to toe! And the man who chaperons such a woman in public can never escape from the .attention of Satan

It goes to prove that one who doesn't save himself from what is forbidden (haram) .can never prevent himself from the influence of Satan

If a person dwells in a usurped house, he cannot escape from Satan unless he quits the occupation of that house. If a person is in habit of doing prohibited things, he .cannot do Isti'adha

Illegitimate sustenance is the biggest impediment in the way of Isti'adha

The important aspects of Isti'adha are absolute piety and total abstinence from prohibited things. Having prohibited (Haram) food renders the entire body of the person satanic. He becomes attached to Satan because Satan's blood flows in the .veins of the person

The tongue with which such a person says audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem, is in fact, the tongue of Satan. The reason for this is that the person has drawn nutrition .from satanic food

Shahīd ath-Thani (The Second Martyr) writes in his 'Asrar as-Salat' that the Prophet ".(S) has said: "Allah (S.w.T.) sees your hearts and not your faces

This proves that mere talking and arguing might have some effect on people but for Allah (S.w.T.) nothing has any weight other than the absolute

.facts

Therefore, about the sacrifices that we make in the way of Allah (S.w.T.), the Holy :Book categorically says

لَن يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِن يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَى

There does not reach Allah their flesh nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable the (guarding (against evil, Taqwa) on your part... (Sura al-Hajj, ٢٢:٣٧

Until the last vestiges of Haram are not removed Isti'adha is not possible

As long as even one morsel of Haram food is in the body of a person, he is himself like Satan. Beating drums seeking protection from Satan is his hypocrisy. As long as he is not able to shake away the influence of Satan from his person, all his prayers are .mere pretences

About rizq al-halal (legitimate food) there are several traditions of Ahl al Bayt (a.s.). Rizq al-Halal is like a seed on which the quality of the plant will depend. Care must be .exercised pure and good seed to ensure the health and sturdiness of the tree

:Allah (S.w.T.) says in the Holy Qur'an

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُواْ مِمَّا فِي الأَرْضِ حَلاَلاً طَيِّباً وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُواْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

O men! Eat the lawful and good things out of what is in the earth, and do not follow the (footsteps of the Shaitan; surely he is your open enemy. (Sura al-Baqara, ٢:١٦٨

Abstain from doubtful food

When one has doubt about the food being halal, he should rather abstain from eating it. Avoid using Haram food and clothes. The use of these will have such deleterious .effect on the person that he becomes the victim of fears and doubts

The Sixth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see ((aright). (Sura al-A'raaf, ٧:٢٠١

A summary of the discussions of the previous evenings is that the main purpose is to escape from the clutches of Satan and attain the protection of Allah (S.w.T.). The main plank for achieving this is taqwa or piety. Abstention from Satan is possible when a person implicitly follows the mandated practices and avoids Haram acts. If the person is careless about these things, then escape from Satan is impossible. His example will be like that of a person who is willfully combating with a wild animal but keeps crying .that he wished to escape from its clutches

Keep reiterating - 'audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem, "I seek refuge with Allah from the cursed satan", but if you are unaware of the aspects of Isti'adha, and .therefore are not complying with them, then the entire exercise will be futile

Innal ladhina-ttaqu (Surely those who are God-conscious): The people who are in the process of escaping from sinful acts, and Satan tries to overwhelm them, they instantaneously busy themselves in the remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.). With the felicity (baraka) of this act, the curtains of thoughtlessness are raised from their eyes and they comprehend the evil schemes of Satan very

.clearly. Thus they are able to save themselves from the evil bait of Satan

It is only the persons of piety who are able to save themselves from the effects of Satan. Otherwise, the evil influence of Satan is always around!

We have mentioned that piety is a very important tool concerning our food habits. Our food, or nutrition, is like the seed of plants. The type of food one takes nourishes good or satanic tendencies in a person. If the seed is satanic, then the body acquires evil tendencies. If a Haram morsel goes down the throat, then the control over the body will come into the hands of Satan. Till the time that morsel remains in the body, Satan .too will occupy it

It is mentioned in the traditions that eating one Haram morsel of food, the effects will remain in the body for forty days and, during this period, the prayers of the person .may not be answered

We are helpless and powerless

If someone gives a serious thought to the facts he would cry out (the verse of the Qur'an), "Amman yujeebul mudtarra… – Who is there to answer the distressed…" The foods we consume take us to darkness. There is no light in them that can give nourishment to our spirits. Our tongues too are influenced by these foods that we utter falsehoods and abusive language. We indulge in misguiding games and play. Backbiting has become our habit. All our limbs and organs have been exposed to the effects of Haram

and unsavory (makrūh) foods. The body has therefore become insensitive to the instinct of remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.). The limbs and organs have thus turned into .the playthings of Satan

The purity or otherwise of food

One type of Haram food is najis (impure) food. If impure food goes down the throat, .Satan will transmit his effect throughout the body

Even babes in arms should not be fed with najis food. One should not think that a child is innocent and free from the incidence of the rules of Shari'ah. Remember, the adults are bound with the requirements of the Shari'ah and it is their duty to take care to nourish their children with pure food. When a child is brought up on najis food, he will develop negative and un-Islamic tendencies as he grows up. It is to be borne in minds .that only animals can take Najis food

The occasion when one is required to abstain even from Halal food is when he is fully sated and can eat no more at that moment. Over-eating is a prohibited and a satanic .trait

Identify the Haram morsel of food

A thing that comes to you in an illegitimate manner is Haram or prohibited. If one acquires bread by cheating someone or he has usurped it from someone, or has bought it from the proceeds of usury, or has consumed without the knowledge or permission of the rightful owner, then he has contravened the rules of Shari'ah. This is .a Haram act

The next in line of impure foods is the 'murdaar' or the meat

of an animal that has not been slaughtered properly as required by the Shari'ah. This applies also to those animals eating of whose meat is permissible in the Islamic Shari'ah. For example, if a person, while slaughtering an animal, doesn't intentionally say the words Bismillah before putting the knife to the throat of the animal, eating of such meat is prohibited. Allah (S.w.T.) says in the Holy Qur'an,

وَلاَ تَأْكُلُواْ مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللّهِ عَلَيْهِ

Don't eat that thing on which Allah (S.w.T.)'s name has not been uttered. (Sura al-An'aam, ٦:١٢١)

Therefore if a halal animal is slaughtered without saying Bismillah, consumption of such meat is forbidden.

Sayyid Tawus has recommended application of this verse to all foods, although the verse pertains only to animal foods. Sayyid Tawus says," All the eatables that are prepared without taking the name of Allah (S.w.T.) before commencing the preparation, I don't partake of! How can a mu'min eat the bread that has been cooked by the baker without taking the name of Allah (S.w.T.)."

The baker's oven and the satanic tune

Times have changed in a funny way. If Sayyid Tawus was living today, he would recall the days when the baker would come to the oven and recite the Hadith al-Kisa and offer prayer before commencing his work.

Today the bread is baked listening to blaring music! They cook the bread accompanied by satanic music. We consume those morsels infused with satanic temperament!

The Seventh Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ

الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see ((aright). (Sura al-A'raaf, ٧:٢٠١

Be Satan's antagonist

We have said that till a person doesn't maintain a distance from Satan, the true spirit of Isti'adha will not manifest in him. The person who indulges in sinning is Satan's :subordinate. Allah (S.w.T.) says

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا

(Surely the Shaitan is your enemy, so take him for an enemy.. (Sura al-Fatir, ٣٥:۶

He is your enemy from the beginning. You too should reciprocate with enmity. Don't befriend him. But if you commit sins, it will be obedience to your enemy, Satan. And obedience is a component of friendship. Always beware that your treacherous enemy is keeping an eye on you. No man is safe from him for a single moment. If you think .that you are safe from him, it is nothing but complaisance

?Does Satan sleep

Someone asked a pious scholar whether it is mentioned in any traditions about Satan sleeping and taking rest. The learned scholar smiled and gave a very interesting reply, "!"If that accursed creature ever slept, I would have some respite

When you sleep, the accursed Satan is fully awake. He never sleeps. He always .guards over men and looks for opportunities to bring harm them

إِنَّهُ يَرَاكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لاَ تَرَوْنَهُمْ

He, and his retainers, watch over you from such a place that they can see you and you .can't see them

(Sura al-A'raaf, ٧:٢٧)

You must remain fortified

What shall men do, then? When the enemy is so powerful and stealthy and can attack through hidden means, it becomes our duty to become fully armed and fortified against Satan. When the enemy is looking for your slightest fault or negligence, then you too must guard against him fully armed. The ammunition for men against Satan is taqwa or piety. Adopt piety to meet the onslaughts of Iblis!

Mu'min's arms: mustahabat (non mandatory) prayers and tark al-makruhat, or abstinence from undesiderable acts

Offering non-obligatory prayers, to the best of one's physical capabilities, is very effective for warding off the enemy, Satan. Similarly, abstaining from doing or using things, although permissible but not desirable, is very useful. Tark al-Ghaflah or Avoidance of Carelessness too might help.

The more a person is careless of the enemy, Satan, the more he will have the propensity to commit sins. With carelessness one might find himself dangerously near the mouth of a serpent. Despite all the friendship and nearness with Satan, the person will not get any support from him when the time for retribution (mukafaat) comes. At that moment Satan will turn away his face as if he never knew the person.

Satan intensifies his attacks in stages

The initial attempts of Satan will be to tempt the mu'min to commit unsavory things (makrūhāt). Then he will open the way of the minor sins (dhunub as-saghira) to the person.

He puts into the mind of the person that the sins he was committing were very trivial and thus encourages him to inadvertently commit major sins (dhunub al-kabira).

The man himself thinks that he was

p: ۴۴

.(committing minor sins, which thought is itself a major sin(1

Satan them persuades the person to commit major sins as a habit. In this way he overwhelms the heart and the spirit of the person. He attacks the mu'min's faith and puts him in severe doubts and fears. Thus Satan makes him his helpless prey. He doesn't keep the person capable of comprehending that he is the victim of Satan's .plot

Only the people of taqwa (piety), with their effective defenses, can save themselves from the maneuvers of Satan. The poor ignorant person cannot meet the onslaught .of Satan

Wudhu or ablution, the sharp instrument of defence of a Mu'min

Of several non-obligatory things that can come to the aid of a mu'min is to always maintain the state of wudhu. The Prophet (S) says, "Al-wudhu silaah al-mu'min!" (!(Wudhu is the weapon of a mu'min

It is the duty of a mu'min to confront the satans that he is in mortal combat with them. .Therefore he must always be clean and with valid wudhu

A person should always be with wudhu, and if some time has passed after performing the ablution, he should renew it as a measure of carefulness that it might have gone void without the person noticing it. It is said, "Al-wudhu nūr wal wudhu 'alal wudhu nūrun 'ala nūr" (Wudhu is a light and performing a wudhu over another is light upon light!). This is the light that dispels the darkness created by Satan in the hearts of the .persons

Fasting and charity break the backbone of Satan

In the armory of a mu'min there are certain arms about

۱- The books wirtten by Ayatullah Dastaghaib, Dhunub al-Kabira (The Greatest Sins) and Qalb as-Saleem (The Tranquil Heart) cover this subject at great length.

:which the Prophet (S) has made a particular mention. He (S) said

Fasts of a mu'min blacken the face of Satan. Sadaqa or charity breaks the backbone" of Satan. Istighfar — entreaty with Allah for mercy — will cut Satan's vein of life, and (love of Allah and good deeds of the person uproot Satan."(١

When you fast the face of Satan, your enemy, will be blackened. If the curtains are raised from your eyes, you will notice that Satan's face has turned black on account of .your fasts

But Satan is not so weak and emaciated that only by fasting you get his face blackened and with a strike of charity you shatter his backbone. You have to perform every action with absolute sincerity that they pass through the seven curtains and .break Satan's backbone and destroy him

Now let us talk about Sadaqa or charity. According to what the Prophet (S) has said, it does break the backbone of Satan. But there is a condition that your charity should be .(.acceptable to Allah (S.w.T

I have seen Satan's mother

It is narrated in Anwār Jazairi that once during an acute famine a preacher was speaking from the pulpit in a mosque. He said, "If someone wants to give sadaqa, seventy satans cling to his hand and try to prevent him from doing the good turn." One mu'min who was seated very near the foot of the pulpit told to his friends with .surprise, "What has Satan to do with sadaqa? I have some wheat at home

---

Safinat al-Bihar, vol ۲, page ۶۲ -۱

I shall go home just now and bring it to the mosque to give away in charity. I shall see how the satans prevent me from doing it!"

The man got up and went home. On reaching home, when his wife became aware of his intention, she shouted at him, "In these days of acute famine you have no care of your wife and children! Perhaps the famine conditions might prolong and we might all die of starvation because of shortage of wheat." Therefore, getting engulfed with doubts the mu'min returned to the mosque empty handed.

The friends asked him, "What has happened. You have returned from home without the wheat? Alas! The seventy satans had clung to your hands and prevented you from doing the sadaqa." The man said, "I didn't see the satans, but definitely I have seen their mother who came in the way of my doing the good deed!"

This proves that man tries to take cudgels with Satan but many a time his wife or others distract him from the good turn.

Sadaqa is also not giving a few coins reluctantly because:

لَن تَنَالُواْ الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنفِقُواْ مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ

By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently in the way of your Lord) out of what you love. (Sura Aal Imran, ۳:۹۲)

What is your financial position? If you are really affluent, Satan's backbone will not break unless you do a sizeable charity. There will be another condition attached to your charity that you should

not brag about it to the beneficiary nor to other friends. Belittling the person who has received your help by reminding of your good deed can render your sadaqa null and .void

Penitence: another weapon in the hands of a Mu'min

Satan makes all his possible efforts to put man in the morass of sin. But if the man expresses penitence at that time from the depths of his heart, Satan's heart would .then shatter into smithereens with disappointment

But the enemy is very cunning. He strives hard to see that the person fails to reach the threshold of penitence and forgiveness. Satan now infuses an inspiration into the heart of his subject, "What has happened? What big sin you have committed that you are so ashamed! Don't you notice around you that others are committing bigger sins and happily living! You are still young. Even if penitence is necessary, you can do that when you are old. At that time penitence will be ideal that you will be weak and sickly and you may not have strength to break your resolve of penitence. This is the time of your youth. How do you expect to keep your promise of abstinence after expressing "?penitence

Two more powerful weapons to defeat Satan

Two more weapons that, according to the Prophet of Allah (S.w.T.) (S), are most effective in defeating Satan are: Sincere obedience of Allah (S.w.T.) and steadfastness .in doing good deeds

It is a Jihad al-Akbar when a person, just for the sake of Allah (S.w.T.) and His friendship, ignores his personal profits and gains. This is

better than the Jihad fought with the infidels because this is confrontation with Nafs al-Ammara or the vile personal instincts. If one fails in this Jihad, he may not succeed in the other! The cause of the defeat will definitely be the instigation and temptation by Satan. In this defeat the person will not only die but also be given retribution in the Hereafter.

Imam as-Sajjad (a.s.) says in one of his supplications:

"O Allah (S.w.T.)! I seek you protection from my enemy! O Master of the House! The ferocious dog is attacking me. Come to my rescue and save me from the harm that it can cause to me!"

Iblīs bites the foot of Imam as-Sajjad (a.s.)

In "Madinat al-Muajiz" it is said that Imam as-Sajjad (a.s.) was busy one day in his prayer. Iblīs wanted to cause disturbance to the Imam's concentration. He ordered one of his retainers to disrupt the Imam's concentration by causing him bodily harm. The narrator says that the accursed satan came to the Imam in the shape of a big python.

We have already mentioned earlier that satans have the faculty to appear in any shape and form they wish to.

Anyway, he went near the Imam (a.s.) who was fully absorbed in his prayer. The accursed creature bit one of the toes of the Imam (a.s.). But the pain of the bite was not felt by the Imam (a.s.) nor was his concentration disturbed an iota. At that moment a loud sound of Allah (S.w.T.)'s anger was heard and the accursed creature

was punished. Then the herald said, “Anta Zayn al-’Abidin – indeed, you are the adornment of the worshippers!”

Warn People against Satanic Deceptions

O people of wisdom! Keep people informed of the machinations of Satan. The aberrations of peoples’ morals have already given some satisfaction to Satan. Don’t endorse his accursed wishes any further. Nahi ‘anil Munkar (abstinence from the prohibited) is obligatory on every believer. At least express abhorrence of the satanic actions. There is no precondition attached to doing this. It is the bounden duty of all of us to save ourselves from such a situation!

Those who witness some foul act of their friends and, instead of advising them to abstain from such acts, encourage and abet them in doing more such acts, then they too will be deemed partners in the commitment of the undesirable acts. It is observed that a person abstains from going to cinema theatres and clubs to avoid getting looked down upon in the society. But he does have a desire to visit such places.

This would mean that he is not afraid of Allah (S.w.T.) but fears his fellow men! Despite his abstinence from going to places of ill repute, he is committing a sin because of his evil desires.

Thinner than the hair and sharper than a sword

Beware of becoming the companions of Satan that he penetrates into your person. We might be carrying a hallucination that we are performing good deeds and, in actual fact, our actions are all at the instigation of Satan. This situation is so delicate that it is thinner than the

.hair and sharper than the sword

According to Hajji Noori some people die with the false pride that they are the friends of Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) and think that by making such claims they will earn a place in the .Heaven

If they are true friends of Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) then they would implicitly comply with all the commandments of the Faith. It is quite possible, if they are making empty claims of friendship with Imam ‘Ali (a.s.), they are acting on the instigation of the accursed !Satan

Beware O hapless Muslims! Your faith is in danger! If Satan puts you in doubts at the time of your death, what would happen to you? In your own false pride you claim to !be Imam ‘Ali (a.s.)’s friend

Where are you heading? In whose obedience you are indulging? If that is Satan, then he is your friend and guide. The friendship of ‘Ali (a.s.) too might be there in your heart. But let it not be dominated by other evil influences! Confess whether you value your worldly desires more than the love of Imam ‘Ali (a.s.)! If your concern is fulfillment of ?worldly desires, are you not concerned for the Hereafter

The Hereafter depends on the worldly desires

The hearts have been conquered by satans. Who is worried about the Hereafter? When people go to the Majlis of Hadrat Abul Fadl al-Abbas, they seek his intercession for the fulfillment of their worldly desires. If their wishes were fulfilled without the !intercession, they might not have gone to the majlis

Has it

ever happened that you have sought intercession that your end comes with love of ‘Ali (a.s.) in your hearts and you don’t become the victims of Satan at the time of !death

A difference of three hundred thousands years

It has been narrated in the traditions that some of the friends of Hadrat (a.s.) will .reach him after three hundred thousand years of retribution

This is true because your heart is for Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) in a thousand ways! But before reaching the presence of the Imam (a.s.) the curtains have to be raised. First, the traces of love for others have to be removed before one could get access to ‘Ali (a.s.) ”!“O Amīr al-Mu’minīn! You must yourself show kindness to your friends

We should hope that we die with the love for ‘Ali (a.s.) in the depths of our hearts and !Allah (S.w.T.)’s Beneficence is on us

The Eighth Talk

Taqwa: the first aspect of Isti’adha

The summary of our discussion is that taqwa or piety is the first, and foremost, aspect of Isti’adha. Therefore, this foremost aspect or pillar must be very strong and .formidable so that the super-structure built on it too is strong

The word taqwa is derived from the word waqayat which means guarding and protecting. In the juridical sense, abstention from acting against awamir wa nawahi .(commandments and prohibitions) is termed taqwa

It is necessary that taqwa should entrench itself to such a degree that the very thought of committing sins becomes abhorrent to us. For example, even if all the friends join together to encourage a man of

piety to gossip or backbite against another person, he must desist from doing it. This is termed malikat e taqwa wherein a tendency develops in a person that he is able to .resist the onslaught of Satan

(Abstinence from Reprehensible (makrūhāt

To reach the elevated state of piety one has necessarily to abstain from unbecoming habits and things. Then abstention from Haram or prohibited things becomes easier .for us. By practicing this abstinence, piety will get stronger

As far as possible we should not miss the optional prayers (Mustahabbat). One who is regular at offering these optional prayers, will never think of foregoing the mandatory .prayers

Thorny jungle and the barefoot traveler

Some learned scholars have given a very interesting definition of taqwa and have .explained it with an interesting example too

When you walk barefooted through a thorny jungle, how will you traverse the way? Will you keep your eyes up and walk casually or keep every step with due care and ?observation to prevent the thorns hurting your bare feet

Taqwa too means that on the path of life Satan has spread thorns and the man of piety has to save himself from getting hurt by them and keep moving forward all the .time

The bait and intrigue of Satan

The exercise of this care is so necessary that Imam Zayn al-'Abidīn has included the :following supplication in the Sahifa al-Kamila

"!O Allah! I beseech for your protection against the bait and intrigue of Iblīs"

You must have noticed that the hunter keeps his net hidden or camouflaged that the animal notices only the bait and not the

p: ۵۳

.net. In the urge for eating the bait, the animal gets caught in the net

The accursed Iblīs uses several baits. He has several camouflaged ditches of sin and .perfidy to entangle his prey

Piety has the faculty of seeking through Satan's baits

The purpose of taqwa is to keep the eyes open and not let them get enamored of the .attractive things in the environment. They can thus see through the baits of Satan

People should pray to Allah (S.w.T.) to give them vision to see through the schemes of .Satan and don't blindly fall prey to his schemes

Some necessary examples: the Bazār is Satan's trap

It is narrated from the Prophet of Allah (S.w.T.) that the bazār is the playground of :Satan

The worst places on the earth is the market places. This is the playground of Satan" where he hoists his standard in the mornings and places his chair, and spreads his chess-board. He cheats in the weighing and measuring of things. He sells away (adulterated things."(۱

This is the reason that the Infallible Imams have exhorted people not to linger for long in the bazārs. They say that bazār is a place only for negotiations and making deals. It .is not proper for people with learning to associate themselves with the bazār

Being the first to enter a bazār and emerging from it the last of all is an undesirable .act because in this period Satan will be the companion of the person

It has been narrated in the traditions that Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) found Abdur Rahman b. Muljim, the accursed, gallivanting in the bazār on

---

Safinat al-Bihar, Vol ۱, Page ۸ -۱

١٨th Ramadhan. The Imam (a.s.) inquired, “What are you doing here?” He said, “I am going round the bazār!” The Imam (a.s.) said, “The bazār is the place for Satan.” Aimlessly loitering in the bazār motivates a person to indulge in undesirable activities. Even today loafing in the bazār is not considered a good activity. If you wish to be a man of piety you have to tread carefully in the bazār, as does a person on a road full .of thorns

Isti’adha before entering the bazār

When you enter the bazār you must seek Allah (S.w.T.)’s protection in the following :manner

O Allah! Protect me that I don’t get involved in sin by being unfair in my dealings, by“ telling lies, by insulting others. Save me from cheating and deceit. Prevent me from doing wrong propaganda and save me from the thoughts of greed and avarice. All ”.these are satanic acts

I don’t suggest that one should never go to the bazār and not transact there. My only appeal is that when one goes to the bazār, he should remember Allah (S.w.T.) and use .his better sense and care

One person quotes from Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.). He says, “I asked the Imam (a.s.) that I have business transactions with a woman and I have to, perforce, negotiate with he face to face. Is my looking at her face legitimate or not?” The Imam replied, ”(!“Ittaqillah! (Keep Allah (S.w.T.)’s fear in your heart and exercise care

Imagine, there could be the possible risk of looking repeatedly at the

face of the strange woman might give rise to sinful thoughts in the mind of the person !and augur ill luck for him

Satan's trap in the Bazār

Even while walking on the street one has to be careful. If you think that on one street there is a trap installed by Satan, take another and safer street, even if that is more tortuous and can take more time to traverse. For example, if there is a cinema theatre or a place of indecent activities on your way, or there are indecent posters of women on display, it is better to take a diversion and used some other street. You might say that such things on the way never tempt you to indulge in sin. But care is always .advisable

Fellow–travellers: a dangerous trap

Sometimes the person(s) traveling with somebody might prove satanic traps. He might be foul mouthed, backbiter or a person of poor intellect. Such a companion .should be avoided

Two companions, particularly when they are women, whose will is generally weak, have tendency to be ensnared by Satan. When they start gossiping, other's matters come up for discussion. As time passes, they shift from innocuous talk to backbiting, .insinuations, scandals, mockery and many such prohibited things

The trap of Iblīs is such that in the beginning people talk about each other's health, exchange humor and narrate interesting anecdotes. But then Satan misguides them .to fall into his trap and start discussing prohibited things

You must have witnessed that when two persons get together, their talk initially had no element

of fault. But in about an hour's time there will be an element of lies in their conversation that might push them into the morass of Hell. Emerging out of the morass will be a Herculean task. As a follow up to the conversation, even if they go to a mosque, you should not think that they are God fearing persons because Satan .continues to be with them

Recognize yourself

Iblīs has so many traps that if a person is not pious and careful, he will get entrapped .in such a way that he will not rest till the person is consigned to the Hell

O people with wisdom! Exercise care and keep your tongue in absolute control. What right you have to find fault with others. Every individual is answerable for his own :actions. The burden of one person will not be put on the back of another

وَلاَ تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى

(And no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another… (Sura al-An'aam, ۶:۱۶۴...

Remember! Talking against each other, backbiting and carrying of tales are all the .traps of Satan. When you are in company of others, beware of this trap

Woman is the most formidable trap

point

Women are the most formidable traps of Satan, with the exception of those women .who have confronted and fought with Satan all their lives

It takes some time for Satan to snare men out of the right path. But women are more vulnerable and aid and abet the involvement of men too. Have you not heard that Satan was not able to

tempt Adam (a.s.) with all his stratagems? Then he turned his attention towards Hadrat Hawwa (a.s.) and succeeded in making both of them to do the forbidden.

It is narrated that Satan said to Hadrat Yahya (a.s.)," Whenever I fail in trapping anyone, I use women to fulfill my plans!"

Yes! With the help of women Satan progresses towards his objective and thus involves the men in his schemes.

وَلَقَدْ صَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِبْلِيسُ ظَنَّهُ

And certainly the Shaitan found true his conjecture concerning them... (Sura Saba, ۳۴:۲۰)

The company of women is the preface to sinning

This is the reason that there are authentic traditions of the Ahl al Bayt (a.s.) that excessive company of women makes men hard of heart.

This doesn't mean that men should totally shun the company of women. But care must be exercised because nearness to women is one of the traps that are used by Satan. You must have observed that a single word from a woman can drastically change the thinking of a man! Can render the person emotional and turn him inadvertently towards many sinful acts.

It is a matter of concern that a strange (Na Mahram) woman in privacy with a man then the trap of Satan becomes strong and very dangerous.

Shaking hands with a strange woman is Haram. Think of the impious animals that how deeply they are entrapped by Satan that they are totally unaware that the bodily touch of a woman is one of the uncanny traps of Satan.

The tale of Barseesa

One imposter, whose name was Barseesa, always used to make the pretense of prayer and lived in seclusion. People

p: ۵۸

.used to say that his prayers would help in the fulfillment of their wishes

The daughter of the king of the time once fell seriously ill. All treatments proved futile. In the end it was thought that the only way for curing her of the illness was the prayer of Barseesa. But the hermit refused to come out of his seclusion to the city or the palace of the king. In the end they reluctantly took the sick princess to his hermitage. .They left her alone with the hermit

If this unfortunate hermit was a true man of piety he would have objected to the leaving of the young princess alone with him. But he fell in the trap of Satan. He looked at the girl and was attracted by her beauty. He had not experienced such a situation .throughout his life. He could not control his baser instinct and raped the girl

But Satan didn't stop at this. He put doubts in the heart of Barseesa that when people learn of his foul act they would lynch him. To save himself from death he thought of killing the girl and burying her. He also thought that if inquiries are made about the .girl, he would say that he didn't know where she had gone

With these doubts and fears in his mind, Barseesa killed the princess while she was .asleep. Then he dug up a trench and buried her

It is narrated that Satan came in human form to the persons

who were searching for the princess and said, “I know where the girl is!” he then guided them to the place where the grave was. The angry team demolished Barseesa’s hermitage and dragged him to the court of the king. People started .spitting on his face. The king ordered him to be hanged

In the olden days the hanging of criminals was not such an easy and fast process as it is now. It was a prolonged and torturous procedure. When Barseesa was about to die Satan came to him and said, “Even now if you prostrate to me, I shall save you!” To save himself from death, Barseesa agreed to prostrate to Satan. In his last breaths Satan tempted Barseesa to commit a major sin and earn a place for himself in the .fiery Hell

The Ninth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see ((aright). (Sura al-A’raaf, ٧:٢٠١

Isti’adha is Effective Only With Piety

The summary of the previous evening’s talk is that the prime and the first aspect of Isti’adha is Taqwa or piety. If a person is pious, then seeking Allah (S.w.T.)’s protection from Satan by saying audhu billahi min al-Shaitanir rajeem is effective. Otherwise .reiterating these words a thousand times over will not bring any results

Today I shall tell you about another

meaning derived from the verse that I have mentioned above and also at a few .places in my previous talks

A Heart Without Piety is The Abode Of Satan

A heart that has not experienced piety, believe me, is the abode of Satan. Satan .doesn't relinquish such a heart easily

A heart without piety is the heart that doesn't remember Allah (S.w.T.). It is in fact crowded with worldly desires like greed, selfishness and Satanic fears. Such hearts are the repositories of wishes for the worldly glitter and show. These hearts are also the shelter for Satan and the sources of his evil designs. Unless the heart cures itself of these satanic instincts and withdraws from supporting and advancing Satan's foul .schemes, it is impossible that the environment for Isti'adha takes shape in it

Sumptuous Food Hungry Dog

You might have experienced that a hungry dog will not leave your side if you are having with you some tasty food. However much you try to chase away the dog, it will return to you. Even if you pick up a stick to chase it away, it will stubbornly stay on. If you don't have any food with you, and a dog chances to come near you, then it will run away if you chase but once. The reason for this lack of interest is that the dogs have a !very strong sense of smell and they would know where there is a bone for them

A Sick Heart is The Eating Place For Satan

Your heart is under the observation of Satan. If he feels that there is food for him in your heart that it

has craving for worldly riches and pomp, then certainly it is the ideal place for him to entrench himself in. If he notices that your heart is having so much avarice that even after acquiring a lot it has craving for more and is envious of others, then he is very pleased to dwell therein. You may say ‘audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem a hundred thousand times, Satan will tenaciously stay on!

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَآنَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

(Shaitan is your open enemy! (Sura al-A’raaf, ٧:٢٢

The only remedy is that you should dispel from your heart all the thoughts of things that attract him. Then with one utterance of the words ‘audhu billahi Satan will run away.

The Majority are Entrapped

It is narrated that once Satan came to the presence of Hadrat Yahya (a.s.). Prophet Yahya (a.s.) asked him about his treatment of Adam (a.s.)’s progeny. He replied that men are divided into three groups.

The first group consists of the revered persons who are always out of his reach. These are the Prophets (a.s.) and the Infallible.

Then Satan said that the second group consists of the people over whom he can have his sway. But with penitence they nullify his maneuvers.

The third group of people is of those in whose hearts he, Satan, lives. These form the vast majority of people.

O believers! Do such acts that Satan is unable to find an entry into your hearts! Otherwise, mere utterance of the words of Isti’adha will not be of any use.

The Thief on the Look Out For Breaking into the House

To prevent Satan from

p: ۶۲

entrenching into your heart you will have to adopt piety. Shun all things that are not liked by Allah (S.w.T.). Shun avarice, immoral acts, bad habits and all such evil traits that take you towards illegitimate acts and illegitimate food. The heart will then be .pure and clean

Once the heart is cleansed of these things, then piety will find it's way into it. It will now have the fear of Allah (S.w.T.) and the fear of the Day of Reckoning. Now Satan will be rendered absolutely helpless. He does have the extreme desire to enter such hearts and waits for the slightest chance that the person commits a mistake and .opens the way for him

Satan is like a thief who does reconnaissance of the fort to find a foothold or the slightest of openings to break in. But when he notices that the keeper of the fort is .alert he escapes from the ramparts disappointed

Iblīs Around The Heart

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see ((aright). (Sura al-A'raaf, ۷:۲۰۱

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ

(Verily those who guard (themselves against evil

- (

This is said about those whose hearts are free of the thoughts of sin. When the heart is pure and clean, then automatically all other organs get into sound repair. Therefore, the tongue, the eyes, the ears and the limbs

.do not get associated with any wrong act

إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ

when an evil thought

Taa-if -

is a person who does

tawaaf

or circumambulates. Here it is meant Satan going round the heart in search of a hole .to break in

مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ

from Satan

-

it is the mention of the retainers of Satan who go round the heart in search of an opening to barge in. But

تَذَكَّرُواْ

t)

(hey become mindful

-

The owner of the heart, a

,mu'min

" ,is busy in Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) and says

Ya Allah, astaghfirullah- 'audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem - O Allah! Protect me

"!from the harm that Satan can cause me

,Hence

فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

(then lo! They see (aright

-

Their eyes instantaneously illuminate with the light of vision and they get warned of .the thief in their environs

Here I wish to point at the words Taa-ifun min ash-shaitan that connote that the one .who takes rounds of the heart of a mu'min to find an entry is from the group of Satan

Remember! If there is piety (Taqwa) for Allah (S.w.T.) in the heart, then it will be pure and clean. The bright light of piety will put the thief to shame and he escapes from there. Pity the heart that is devoid of piety and full of worldly desires. Such a person .will fall into the clutches of Satan and meet a sad end

?Why the Suicide

.One avaricious trader sold his goods worth thirty thousand for one hundred thousand

Later on he learned that the first buyer sold the merchandise for three hundred thousand within three days. He was distraught with remorse that the opportunity of making a huge profit was missed by him. He was jealous and envious of the traders who made the big gain. He started crying and was restless during the day and in the nights. He was so upset that at last he consumed lime mixed with sulfur and committed suicide. The sole reason for the tragedy is that the person was wedded .only to worldly gains and was devoid of Allah (S.w.T.)'s fear

?Why Isti'adha is not Effective

We should all awake from the slumber of carelessness because the root cause of all .sins is the love for the world

Keep your heart free of all pollutants. Because, if only the use of the tongue sufficed, then saying audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem prior to every mandatory prayer would do! This goes to prove that only saying the Isti'adha from the tongue is not .sufficient

What is the reason that when people stand for prayer, their attention hovers around everywhere and is not focused on the prayer! This despite reiteration of Allah (S.w.T.)'s name by the tongue time and again. It proves the point that the mind and heart of the person should be as much present as the person uses his tongue during .the prayer

A person once lost his wallet. He searched for it the whole day. Around the time of Maghrib prayer in the evening he remembered the

place where he had left the wallet. Immediately after saying the salutations at the end of the prayer he called his servant to look for the wallet in a particular place. The ”?servant said, “Sir! Were you offering your prayer or searching for your wallet

:Remember! There are four things that prevent the light entering the heart

As long as we don’t guard against these four things, darkness will prevail on our hearts. The very first thing that must be avoided is impurity of the body. The second important thing is that we should refrain from disobedience to Allah (S.w.T.). The third is to guard against the fears and doubts created by Satan. The last, but not the least, is abstaining from bad manners that can turn a man into animal. As long as a heart .remains under the spell of bad manners, it will not understand the spirit of Isti’adha

Such persons remain under the influence of Satan and away from Allah (S.w.T.) even at the time of their death. It has been mentioned in the traditions that, “Yuhshar an-naas ‘ala niyyaatihim” – “People will be raised (on the Day of Judgement) based on their intentions”. Allah (S.w.T.) gauges the intentions of the heart rather than the .actions that result from these intentions

Remember That Death is A Reality

There are very few sermons of Amīr al-Mu’minīn (a.s.), in Nahj al-Balagha, that don’t throw light on this fact of life. He says, “Don’t forget death because it is the best cure for the ailments of the heart

and the spirit. One who always keeps this fact in view, it is like he has opened the door ".to guidance and reform

After the day's toil when you reach home, then remember that perhaps your body might be carried to the grave next morning. When you leave home for work in the .morning, keep in mind the possibility that you might not return home alive

If man inculcates this spirit in his nature, then slowly he will overcome the traits of .jealousy, parsimony, avarice, hypocrisy, satanic fears and carelessness

When I am not sure whether I will be alive till tomorrow or not, then what is the use of ?avarice and unnecessarily displeasing others with my actions

Flies Buzz Around Honey

Another example is sited for you. You must have noticed the way ants and other insects hover around sweet things. No matter how much you try to chase them away, they return to pester you. The only way to get rid of them is to remove the things that .attract them

O Mu'min! Clean your heart of all impurities that Satan runs away with one Isti'adha .from you

Hadrat Imam as-Sajjad (a.s.) used to recite Du'a al-Hazeen after the nightly prayer (Salat al-Layl, Namaz-e-Shab). He supplicates to Allah (S.w.T.) thus, "O Allah help me! "!Satan is attacking my heart

When a mu'min has nothing in his heart that interests Satan, and he remembers Allah .(S.w.T.), then only one Isti'adha would suffice to chase the accursed enemy away

Satan, a Stumbling Block in the Way of Penitence

:It is narrated that when the following verse was revealed

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا

p: ۶۷

فَعَلُواْ فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُواْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُواْ اللّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُواْ لِذُنُوبِهِمْ

And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls (remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults... (Sura Aal Imran, ۳:۱۳۵

Satan cried out and his retainer assembled around him and asked, "What has happened? Why are you shouting?" The accursed one said, "Why shouldn't I shout and cry! We work so hard to make a man commit sins. And he expresses penitence "!that renders our efforts null and void

Every individual from his retainers gave his own advice on the matter. But Satan was not satisfied with any of those. Then someone said, "The only way will be to prevent man from reaching the threshold of the door of penitence!" Satan said, "Your "!suggestion is right! If there is any way for us, this is the way

(.The Practice of Imam as-Sajjad (a.s

Imam as-Sajjad (a.s.) used to supplicate to Allah (S.w.T.) in the following way: "O Allah (S.w.T.)! Keep me in your shelter from this enemy who is after my life! O Helper of all the helpless! I am forlorn and supportless! Come to my rescue. From one side this dog is attacking me and on the other is the world tempting me with all its glitter and attractions! There is pressure of avarice and greed on my heart! I seek your help "!against all these

(.The Supplication of Ghareeq during the Absence of Imam al-Mahdi (a.j

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.), while predicting the period of the absence of the Last Imam (a.j.), says, "During that troublesome period there will be so much of sedition that

the angels would be astonished at the very few deaths of men of piety!" The narrator asked the Imam (a.s.)," What should the people do in that difficult time?" The Imam (a.s.) replied, "They should recite the Du'a al-Ghareeq. This consists in saying 'Ya Allahu ya Rahmanu, ya Raheemu ya Muqallibul Quloob, thabbit qalbi 'ala deenik - O Allah, O Beneficent, O Merciful, O Overturner of hearts! Keep my heart steadfast on "!Your religion

Man should think that he is really helpless in times when Satan's retainers are roaming free. No heart is safe from their onslaught. O Allah (S.w.T.)! Guard our hearts !from the effects of these Shayateen

The Tenth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see ((aright). (Sura al-A'raaf, ٧:٢٠١

It is proved from the previous talk that the most important aspect of Isti'adha is Taqwa or piety. If a person is devoid of antagonism of Satan and doesn't submit .himself to Rahman, then he is in the trap of Satan and his Isti'adha is of no use

Why Isti'adha

Here one might ask when there is Taqwa in a person, then what is the need for Isti'adha. When a person doesn't commit any sins, and is not a transgressor, then there may not be the need for seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s

.Protection against the onslaught of Satan

The reply to this question is that the question itself is topsy- turvy. The fact is that Isti'adha is only for the people of Taqwa. One who observes Taqwa will always submit to Allah (S.w.T.) for His protection lest the evil Satan catch him unawares and achieve control over his heart. Once Satan penetrates his heart, all his actions will be at the .instance of Satan

A person whose heart is free of the influence of Satan and spends his time in prayer and supplication to Allah (S.w.T.), should necessarily seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection against the fears and temptations of Satan, and his ilk, because they are always on the lookout for the slightest opportunity to subdue him. A mu'min has to exercise .utmost care in this matter

Good Deeds or Guidance For Evil

Satan strives hard to find a place in the heart of a mu'min. It is narrated that even if a mu'min escapes unscathed from the trap of Satan because of his good deeds ninety nine times, he might become the victim on the hundredth attempt! It is quite possible that the instigation for the good deeds ninety nine times too was by Satan only to make the person complacent that he fell into the trap on the hundredth attempt! Thus Satan derives satisfaction from destroying in one stroke the effects of the good actions of the person spread over long period. The dividing line between the good and the evil is very narrow and one must take great care

not to falter towards evil. Therefore the Imams (a.s.) supplicate to Allah (S.w.T.) thus, “O sustainer, give me vision in the matter of Faith! That during performance of good deeds Satan doesn’t involve me in fears and misapprehensions and thus push me into ”.the morass of evil

Evil Through Good

There is a social function arranged by someone’s kin. Satan persuades him to attend it as a matter of (silat ar-rahm) giving attention to the welfare of his relations. When the person reaches the venue, he finds that the party was in full swing with dance and song and service of intoxicants. He doesn’t like the atmosphere. His heart prompts him to get away from that participating in such gatherings is Haram. But Satan tells him ‘If you leave the party while it is in progress, it will amount to breaking the party. ’.This step will be qata ar-rahm or causing hurt to your relatives

.Thus Satan misguides people from the path of virtue towards vice

To Make One Miss The Mandatory Prompting People To Busy in Optional Rites

Sometimes Satan encourages people to give more attention to optional matters to make them miss the mandatory duties. For example, he prompts a person to proceed on a pilgrimage to the mausoleum of Imam Ridha (a.s.). he convinces him that performing this optional pilgrimage will bring him lots of reward in the Hereafter. The person neglects his mandatory duty of providing for his old parents and family and .proceeds on the pilgrimage

Satan thus makes people overlook mandatory duties in the performance of the .optional

Losing Interest in Prayers

Sometimes Satan makes a person engrossed

in an optional act to such an extent that he loses interest and inclination to perform the mandatory prayers. For example he puts in the mind of a person to proceed for the Ziyarats to Karbala that his sins would be pardoned and his prosperity would increase. Satan also convinces him somehow that if he went illegally without proper papers and permissions, his rewards would be redoubled! The person thus commences his journey. To his misfortune he gets caught for making an illegal entry and is put in jail. Then he curses himself why his legs were not fractured to prevent him from going there. Imagine, how Satan tempted the person to go in a hurry for performance of an optional act and as a result made him lose interest in the !pilgrimage of great felicity

O Allah! Give Us Vision in the Matters of Faith

The people of piety cannot do without recourse to Isti'adha. They are always fearful of the interference of Satan because he keeps trying to divert them from worship of Allah (S.w.T.). May Allah (S.w.T.) give the vision to people that they are able to understand if the acts they are doing are really good or are evil acts that Satan has tempted them to perform. It is the common observation that an act appears good and .harmless but in reality it turns out to be otherwise

.To illustrate the point a tradition is mentioned here

Satan Praying Suspended in the Sky

It is mentioned in Bihar al-Anwar from Usūl al-Kafi that Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) ,narrated about a person, in the olden times

who kept himself busy in prayer and supplication to Allah (S.w.T.). He was so deeply engrossed in prayer that Satan, despite all the efforts, was unable to disrupt this activity. Upset at his failure, Satan called a meeting of his retainers to devise ways and :means of achieving his desire. He said

I have not succeeded tempting the pious person despite all my efforts. Can you think“ ?”of a stratagem to unnerve him

One of his disciples said, “By creating evil desires in his mind I shall motivate him to ”.commit adultery

Satan replied, “There is no use. The desire for women has been extinguished from his ”.heart

Another disciple said, “I shall tempt him with delicacies and drinks that he gets ”.destroyed consuming Haram food and alcohol

”.Satan said, “No use! After years of penance he has lost palate for good food

A third retainer said, “Perhaps he can be tricked through the way of prayer which is his ”!favorite activity

”.Satan said, “Yes. We might succeed this way

Anyway, the result of this confabulation was that Satan himself took the responsibility to do the job. He adopted the garb of a human being, suspended himself in the .atmosphere sitting on a prayer mat and pretended to be busy in prayer

When the pious person saw this, he went to inquire of Satan about the prayer that he performed to get the faculty of suspending himself in the atmosphere. But Satan appeared so intently engrossed in prayer that even after repeated calls he did not give any

attention to the pious person. Fed up of waiting, the person asked Satan to respond to .him under an oath. Satan took a respite from his pretended prayer

The pious person asked, “What great task you have performed that you are at such ”?an elevated place

He replied, “I have achieved this status through commitment of a sin. After committing the sin I have repented and done penance. Even now I continue to be penitent. With my worship I am growing stronger by day. If you desire to achieve the ”.same status you too must commit adultery and then busy yourself in penitence

The pious man said, “Neither do I know the way of doing adultery nor have I money ”.for the purpose

Satan gave him two Dirhams and explained the way to the house of a woman of ill .repute

The pious person entered the town and inquired from the people about the exact location of the woman’s house. People thought that he was intending to visit her to sermon the woman to give up her foul ways. The man went to the woman and gave her the money and demanded to do adultery with her. At this point Allah (S.w.T.)’s help came to his rescue that the woman thought of preventing him from committing the sinful act. The woman saw piety written large on the face of the person and that he .was not habituated of going to such houses of ill repute

”?She asked him, “How have you come here

,The man replied

”.This is not your concern. I have given you the money and you must comply“

The woman said, “As long as I don’t know the real reason of your coming here, I shall ”.not submit to you

.Alas, the pious man yielded and told the entire story to her

The woman said, “I might be losing custom by dissuading you from your resolve, but I ”.am sure it was only Satan who has sent you here

The man said, “You are wrong because he has assured me that I shall be able to get ”.the same status as enjoyed by him if I commit the sin of adultery

The woman said, “Don’t be foolish! How are you sure that after committing adultery you will ever get a chance to be penitent and your penitence will get accepted? ”.Believe me! You are under the spell of Satan’s temptation

When the pious person was persistent, the woman said, “I am ready to yield to you. But go back to the place once and see if the person is still busy in prayer suspended in the atmosphere. If you find him there, then you can come back to me. But if he is not there, then you must believe that it was Satan who wants to deter you from the path ”.of piety

When the pious person reached the place, he found no trace of Satan there. Then it dawned on him that the woman had saved him from falling into the abyss of sin. He offered a sincere

.prayer for the fallen woman

It has been said in the tradition that when the woman died, a revelation came to the Prophet (S) of the time that he should join her funeral procession. The Prophet (S) protested to Allah (S.w.T.) that she was a fallen woman. The reply was, “Yes! But she was responsible for sending back to us a pious person who was running away from ”!piety under the deceit of Satan

Sermons and moralizing are very valuable. Every effort must be made to dissuade persons from committing sins. Motivate them to be penitent. Allah (S.w.T.) will reward .them as well as those who make effort to reform such persons

It is a matter of great surprise that when we look at the temptations of Satan and our moral weaknesses, we fail to understand what will be our end! Will we be able to .reach Him? We only need Allah (S.w.T.)’s Mercy and Munificence for our deliverance

:In a supplication we say

Idha ra-aytu maulaya dhunubi faz’itu wa idha ra-aytu karamika tam’itu

When I think of my sins O my Master, I am terrified! But when I think of Your !Kindness, I become hopeful

The Eleventh Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see ((aright). (Sura al-A’raaf, ٧:٢٠١

Satan The Initiator Of Actions

The topic of discussion is Isti'adha. Isti'adha

is the way of the pious. Those who are not pious have Satan dwelling within them. All their thoughts and actions are at the instance of Satan. Then what is the need for .their seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection against the influences of Satan

Escape from Satan will naturally be sought by those who are men of piety and whenever Satan creeps near their hearts, they busy themselves in the Dhikr or .Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.). When Satan realizes this he escapes from them

The men of piety are always wary that they don't commit prohibited actions and don't miss the legitimate and obligatory practices. Whenever any satanic entity comes near their hearts, intuition warns them and, they busy themselves in Isti'adha. When Satan .notices this, he slinks away

When the persons of piety are busy remembering Allah (S.w.T.), their vision and .knowledge manifests to them the trap Satan has set for them

My intention is to dwell in today's talk on the word 'mubseroon' in the verse under reference. The men of piety are endowed 'baseerat' or vision by Allah (S.w.T.) to perceive the trap laid by Satan with their own eyes. When Satan realizes that his game was over, he flies away. It is very felicitous that a mu'min has the vision of the fears and doubts that Satan can create. These fears and doubts could be in the .matters of faith or about morals etc

Satan doesn't even Spare the Prophets

Certain fears and doubts created by Satan pertain to matters of belief and in this aspect he

.doesn’t refrain from influencing even the hearts of the prophets

It is narrated that Satan came to Hadrat ‘Isa (a.s.) when he was standing on the peak of a hill. Satan addressed ‘Isa (a.s.) saying, “O Spirit of Allah! If you fall from this peak, can Allah save your life!” He replied, “I can tell you with my vision and Understanding that Allah would most certainly save me.” Satan added, “If you are so certain, dive ”!down from here that He saves you

Hadrat ‘Isa (a.s.) understood that Satan was up to his tricks. Therefore he said, “O accursed one! Do you intend to put Allah to test! My Faith is strong. Allah is Omnipotent and has control over every thing. You have come here with the purpose of testing whether saving me is possible or not.” Hadrat ‘Isa (a.s.) also added, “My Creator has commanded me not to do such things. Purposely falling from the top of the hill will be an attempt at suicide that is Haram. If one falls from the hill accidentally, ”!and Allah wishes him to live on, then He will save him

Hadrat ‘Isa Converses With Satan

It is narrated that once Satan came to Hadrat ‘Isa (a.s.) and said, “O Spirit of Allah! You are yourself the Omnipotent and Omniscient God.” Hadrat ‘Isa (a.s.) reprimanded him for this talk and said, “I am Allah’s creation and slave on whose prayer He brings back ”!the dead to life

When Hadrat ‘Isa (a.s.) tried to remove doubts of Satan in this manner, he

.ran away from there crying

Satan puts such doubts and fears in the minds of the pious persons. But they understand his tricks with the light of piety that they are only satanic doubts. For example; sometimes he puts a doubt in the heart of a mu'min that a particular person, despite being young and strong, has resorted to begging. Why has he turned a beggar? Satan's purpose of creating such doubts is to create apprehensions in the minds of believers about the will of Allah (S.w.T.). But if the person is a mu'min aware of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Greatness he will say, "Astaghfirullah! How can I dare to question the Will of Allah? My Faith is that His acts are all replete with wisdom beyond our ".comprehension

(.Satan Attempts to Create Fears in the Mind of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s

Every pious person strives to perform good deeds and Satan tries his best to dissuade him from doing so. If a person performs a good deed, Satan tries to neutralize its good effects through his tricks. For example; he will encourage the person to express .pride after doing some good turn. Satan is thus the sworn enemy of all good deeds

.Here the example of one of the elite prophets of Allah (S.w.T.) will be appropriate

You must have heard of Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) that when he was taking his beloved son Ismail (a.s.) to mina to sacrifice him under the Commandment of Allah (S.w.T.), Satan was flabbergasted. He knew that if Ibrahim (a.s.) was able to fulfill this task, he would get a very

elevated place in the consideration of Allah (S.w.T.). He thought of stratagems to prevent Ibrahim (a.s.) from achieving this.

The first thing he did was to go to Hadrat Hajra and create doubts and fear in her mind. He told her, "I have seen an aged person guiding a handsome youth by hand. Who is he?" Hadrat Hajra said, "That is my spouse Ibrahim (a.s.)." Satan asked, "Are you aware of his intention as to why he is taking your son along with him? His intention is to cut the head of his son Ismail (a.s.)" Hadrat Hajra replied, "Ibrahim (a.s.) has not harmed even his sworn enemies. How is it possible that he will sever the head of his own son." Satan said, "He is thinking that Allah (S.w.T.) has commanded him to do so!" The great lady immediately understood that the person talking to her was Satan and was trying to create doubts in her mind. She said, "O accursed creature! Run away! If what he is doing is under Allah's Command then we abide by it."

Iblīs Tests Faith

The purpose of the creation of Satan is to judge on the Day of Reckoning as to who was steadfast in keeping to the right path and who veered away from it under his evil influence. Therefore Allah (S.w.T.) says in the Holy Book:

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّن سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يُؤْمِنُ بِالْآخِرَهِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِى شَكٍّ

And he (satan) has no authority over them, but that We may distinguish him

(who believes in the hereafter from him who is in doubt concerning it. (Sura Saba, ۳۴:۲۱

Although Hadrat Hajra is a woman but the strength of her faith is such intense that she agreed to sacrifice her only son in the Way of Allah (S.w.T.) without a whimper of .doubt or fear

(.Satan Attempts to create Doubts in the Mind of Ibrahim (a.s

Now Satan went to Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) and said, "What are you trying to do?" He replied, "I shall sacrifice my son, Ismail (a.s.) Satan said, "What crime has he committed?" Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) said, "This I am doing on Allah's Command!" Satan said, "If you kill your own son for the good will of Allah, it will be a bad example for your followers to emulate in the future!" Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) again reiterated that .(.what he was doing was under the command of Allah (S.w.T

Satan said, "Is it not possible that what you are doing is not Allah's Command." At this moment Hadrat Ibrahim hit Satan with a stone. This is why there is the practice of the Hajjis throwing stones at Rami Jamarat during Hajj as an emulation of Hadrat .Ibrahim (a.s.)'s action

Now the accursed Satan turned his attention towards Hadrat Ismail (a.s.) who was walking behind his revered father. He said, "Young lad! Do you know where you father is taking you?" Ismail (a.s.) said, "I don't know!" Satan added "Your father intends to kill you." Ismail (a.s.) asked, "How could he do such a thing?" Satan said, "He thinks that Allah has commanded him

to do it!" Hadrat Ismail (a.s.) said, "If he is acting on Allah's orders, then my life is a small sacrifice for that purpose!" But, despite this rebuff Satan persisted in trying to create doubts in the mind of the young Ismail (a.s.). Then Hadrat Ismail (a.s.) protested to his father, "O father! See who is this person who is pestering me?" Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) said, "This is Satan the accursed!" Then Hadrat Ismail (a.s.) too hurled .stones at him

?Have We too Spurned Satan at Any Time

Now I address the revered Hajjis in this gathering! In emulation of Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) you have done the rite of Rami Jamarat during the Hajj. Jamarat is not only a rite to be performed during the Hajj, but throughout our lives we have to spurn and chase .away Satan

Where are those people who throw stones at Satan whenever he tries to create fears and doubts in their minds. They confront him with boldness and exercise control over themselves in times of anger and fury. When the wish to do prohibited acts asserts .itself, they shake it away with determination

Sometimes it happens that a person wishes to do a good turn, then Satan brings forth a doubt that perhaps some other deed would be more appropriate. The person thus .falls in doubt and is unable to act

?Who is Greater

It is narrated that now the father and son determined to comply with Allah (S.w.T.)'s Command; the father to sacrifice his son; and the son too to offer himself in sacrifice to Allah

S.w.T.). The old father put the son's head on the ground and put the sharp knife on his) throat. At this moment the angels were surprised and asked each other, "Who is greater, the father or the son!" The father is great because he is willing to sacrifice his son who is the fruit of much prayer and supplication. The son is great because he is !offering himself in sacrifice to Allah (S.w.T.) without a whimper of protest

Both have come out successful in their test. But Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish was that Ismail .(a.s.) should live

Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.)'s Laments

It is narrated that when Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) felt that the knife was not cutting, and that the command for the sacrifice has been rescinded by Allah (S.w.T.), he cried. Hadrat Jibril (a.s.) came to him and asked, "Why are you crying?" He said, "I think I am not fit enough that my sacrifice was not acceptable to Allah!" Jibrīl (a.s.) said, "You have successfully gone through all the stages of the sacrifice. Your heart even then cries that it has not reached its conclusion." Then Hadrat Jibril (a.s.) told Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) about the hardships and the supreme sacrifice in store for Imam !(.Husayn (a.s

The Twelfth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see

(aright). (Al-Aaraf ۷:۲۰۱)

The Reality of Isti'adha is in This Verse

If this Holy Verse (۷:۲۰۱) is considered with attention and thought is given to the facts, we will comprehend that the real spirit of Isti'adha is reflected in it.

Those who have abandoned lascivious desires and turned their attention towards Allah (S.w.T.), they have come out of Satan's abode and entered Allah (S.w.T.)'s sanctuary. Those in whose hearts Satan doesn't live, whenever he hovers around their heart for a chance to enslave them, they busy themselves in the Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.). Thus their hearts are illumined, they become aware of Satan's trickery and with the power of Isti'adha chase him away.

The Supplication of Imam Sajjad (a.s.)

Hadrat Zayn al-'Abidin (a.s.) submits to Allah (S.w.T.) in Sahifa as-Sajjadiya:

"O Allah (S.w.T.)! When we have two desires and only one of them is to Your liking and the other might win your displeasure. Then turn our hearts towards the desire that is to Your liking that pleases You. Deny us (even the thought of) the desire that displeases You."

When Allah (S.w.T.) diverts people's hearts in a certain direction, their thinking changes drastically. As far as we don't make piety our way of life the hearts are controlled by Satan. In such a condition there will be no use of remembering Allah (S.w.T.). When the heart is in the clutches of Satan, how could a person charter his own plan of action?

To illustrate this point I am relating another fable.

The Thief Who Put off the Lamp

In the olden days when wax candles or fat wicks were used in homes for lighting ,purpose in homes

p: ۸۴

a thief entered a house in the night and started gathering things to take away. The owner of the house heard some noise and got up from his bed to light a lamp. When the thief realized that the master was up and trying to light a match, he slowly blew air at it to put it off. In the time that the person could light another match the thief put his fingers in his mouth and with his saliva moistened the wick of the lamp. Thus the house owner could not put on a light.

The foolish house owner couldn't realize there was someone there who was playing a trick on him. Hence, he gave up his efforts and retired to sleep again. The thief then did his work and departed.

A Thief in the Heart

Believe me, even of the esoteric world the same is the condition. If Satan comes to live there, he doesn't allow the person to remember Allah (S.w.T.). If a man has no piety, any amount of talking and remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) will be of no use.

You might have noticed that during times of strife, despite remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.), man doesn't realize that he is completely in the clutches of Satan. In such a situation, however much one sermonizes about Allah (S.w.T.), the Prophet and the Imams (a.s.) he will not see any reason. Satan will not allow the litigant to mend his attitude more because he is not a man of piety.

Refrain from Fights Even if you Are Right

The Prophet (S) has said

that a person who refrains from fights even if he is on the side of the truth, he would guarantee a high place in the Heaven for such a person. When a person is not on the .right, but avoids fights, his place will be in the lowest stage in the Heaven

Avoiding fights is possible only when a person is free of greed. Otherwise Satan will not ever allow him to live at peace with others. If a person dies in that condition, he .will be termed as a man of Satan

It is quite possible that there are persons who offer prayers, even in the mosque, under the control of Satan. Do these persons really come to the mosque in obedience to Allah (S.w.T.)? If they have come with Allah (S.w.T.)'s call, then why are they so self-conscious? If they refrain from fights and adopt piety, then only they will have vision .and get deliverance

(.The Patience Of Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s

Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) was among the Prophets of the past. His grave is near Hilla in Iraq and mention has been made of him in the Holy Qur'an. In Bihar al-Anwār there is a narration about the reason for his naming as Dhul Kifl (a.s.). There was a prophet prior to him, whose name was Yasa'a (a.s.). His mention is also there in the Holy .(Qur'an. - Wal Yasa'a wa Dhal Kifl (Sura Saad, ۳۸:۴۸

Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) was among the companions and disciples of Hadrat Yasa (a.s.). (.In his last days Hadrat Yasa (a.s

told to his companions, "Of you the person who promises to abide by the oath that I intend to take from you shall be my successor and vicegerent after me. The oath I want you to take is that you will not get angry under any circumstances and will not become a victim of Satan's instigation." Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) made a promise to the effect that he would never yield to the satanic instinct of anger. This was the reason that he was appointed to the august position of prophet and successfully faced the .events that followed

One should know that when a person is steadfast in his resolve to keep on the right path, Satan strives with equal tenacity to break his resolve. Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) was resolved to prevent the thought of anger ever crossing his mind. He stood like a .mountain against all the efforts of Satan to provoke anger in him

Satan Seeks Help

One day Satan got together a meeting of his retainers. He said, "I am tired of the tenacity of Dhul Kifl (a.s.). Whatever effort I make to break his resolve of not becoming angry, I fail utterly." One Satan whose name was Abyad said, "I shall provoke Dhul Kifl (a.s.) to get angry!" Satan appointed him to this task. One regular habit of Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) was that he used to be praying and supplicating the whole night. During the day he kept himself busy attending to the tasks of people till Dhuhr

prayer. He used to sleep at this time and awake at the time of Asr. Thereafter he used .to busy himself in the service of people

Satan Knocks At The Door

One day, when Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) was asleep, as usual, after Dhuhr, Satan knocked at the door and the janitor asked him, "What brings you here!" Satan said, "I have to make an appeal to him!" The Janitor said, "Come in the morning. Now he is ".sleeping

Satan started shouting, crying and pleading aloud. He said that he lived at a distant place and he couldn't possibly come again the next day. Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.)'s sleep got disturbed in this hubbub. He asked him to go away and return with the respondent to his complaint next morning. Satan said that the other person would refuse to come. Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) gave him his ring and asked him to show it to the person and tell .him that he was summoned to attend the hearing

Satan went away but came back next day at the same time as he came on the previous day. Again he cried, shouted and disturbed Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.)'s sleep. Hadrat (a.s.) woke up from his siesta, talked calmly to him and gave a letter in the .name of the respondent

.Abyad went away and Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) was unable to sleep even on that day

Satan Gets Frustrated

Imagine the condition of a person who has not slept for three consecutive nights and days. On the third day too Satan came to

the door of Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) at the same time that he did on the previous two days. He disturbed his sleep and said that the respondent did not bother to give any cognizance to his letter. Then he started shouting ferociously to arouse anger in Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) The accursed one said, “If you personally come along with me ”!now, perhaps my work can be attended to

It is mentioned in the narration that the day was so hot that if a piece of meat was kept out it would become a kebab instantly. Satan made so much noise that Hadrat Dhul Kifl (a.s.) agreed to go with him. When he traversed the way coolly in that scorching condition, Satan knew that it was impossible to disturb Hadrat Dhul Kifl !(a.s.)’s resolve to keep his anger in control. Therefore he fled from there

There Will Be Negative Effect of Supplication on a Heart Devoid of Piety

Sometimes remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) has a negative effect on a heart devoid of .piety

Haven’t you heard that while the accursed Ibn Ziyad was handling the severed head of Imam Husayn (a.s.), a drop of blood fell on his thigh and pierced to the other side of it. He put the head on the floor and touched the teeth of the Imam (a.s.) in a .blasphemous manner with a stick

Zaid Bin Arqam, a companion of the Prophet (S), was present at that moment. He told Ibn Ziyad that he had witnessed the Prophet (S) kiss these teeth affectionately that he was blaspheming against. The

accursed person, instead of repenting his foul act told to Zaid Bin Arqam, “It is a pity that you are an old man now! Otherwise I would have severed your head .immediately!” Then he sent Zaid out of the court

It is not only Ibn Ziyad who perpetrated such foul behavior. Anyone whose heart is blind and deaf will have such tendencies. Any talk of remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) will .fall on the flat ears of such persons

The Thirteenth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see ((aright). (Al-Aaraf ٧:٢٠١

Taqwa or Piety is Achieved With Practice

When we admit a child for the first time in a school, on the first day he is neither able to read nor write. He gets motivated to do any schoolwork in the beginning with difficulty. But when he is slowly initiated into reading and writing, he makes rapid .progress. In time he will not have any difficulty in coping with his lessons

Same is the case of taqwa or piety. Man has to strive to abstain from committing sins.

Whenever he finds a situation to commit a sin, he should control himself and avoid committing it. The way a child gets used to reading and writing and becomes comfortable at these skills after some time, similarly when one tries with

full determination to shun sinning, in good time he will be able to totally stop these undesirable acts. At this stage Allah (S.w.T.) will put a light in his heart that makes avoiding sins easier for him. He will have so much control on his tongue that even for .the kingdom of the entire world, he would not tell a lie

The same sins, the avoidance of which was next to impossible for him, now become very difficult to commit! Man should make efforts to inculcate such will power that he is able to avoid commitment of sins with ease. With this faculty in his heart, he will .draw pleasure from the success of his efforts

No doubt Allah (S.w.T.) doesn't like infidelity in his creatures. "He has made faith (Imān) dear to them. He has made it the adornment for their hearts. And has created ".abhorrence in him for Infidelity and disobedience

At last a sinner starts disliking sins. He achieves the state of Taqwa where sin appears bitter than the bitterest thing and every small evil act seems the most evil. He thinks .that every sin, howsoever minor, worth reproaching to the maximum extent

The highest level of piety is cultivated after much practice and constant effort. There .are a few stages and ranks of this piety

Shunning Doubtful Things

When a person gets used to avoiding prohibited things and depending only on fair living, he advances one step, and with more effort he also avoids use of things, which give him some doubt of their

being legitimate. Therefore, he not only avoids the use of haram objects but also .abstains from things about which he has the slightest doubt of being haram

He also abstains from uttering such words that Allah (S.w.T.) might dislike the use of. In stages he achieves total avoidance of the use of doubtful things in his day-to-day .living

Shunning of The Unbecoming Or Makrūhāt

The man now reaches a higher state of piety when he shuns the unbecoming (makrūhāt) and the stage is set for the use of only the desirables (mustahab). Now he has reached such a high state of piety that he does not avoid the desirables although he knows that they are not mandatory and not binding on him. He also meticulously avoids doing or using unbecoming (makrūh) things that are, no doubt, not totally .banned

Shunning The Permissible For Shunning The Prohibited

He becomes careful in the use of such permissible things that give him doubt that .their use might make him avoid certain mandatory things

For example, it is permissible to remain awake till mid-night in conversation with friends. In that time there can be two or three rounds of eating snacks. But, if one sleeps late on a full stomach, he might find it difficult to stir out of his bed for the Fajr prayer that is mandatory. Therefore, a pious person develops such a faculty in his nature that he takes care to avoid every permissible thing that might cause difficulty .in performance of his mandatory duties

Saving a Coin a Day For Use During Ramadhan

A baker was our friend. He was very skillful and capable in his

trade. The month of Ramadhan came during summer one year. He took off from work the whole month of Ramadhan to avoid the excessive heat of his work place, while he fasted. He could do it by cleverly putting aside a coin from his earnings every day for the eleven months previous to Ramadhan to meet his expenses when he closed his shop during the fasting month.

Although spending this coin every day was permissible and well within his rights, the baker wanted to prepare himself properly for the fasting in Ramadhan that is mandatory!

Travel Becomes the Reason for Avoiding the Mandatory Duties

It is narrated that a person went to Imam (a.s.) and said, "I am required to travel to a cold country. These days there is so much snow fall there that the entire land is covered with it. It is difficult to get water for wudhu (the minor ablution) nor is it possible to do tayyamum (the dry ablution). In such a situation what instructions you give me about performance of the mandatory prayers?"

The Imam got angry on him and said, "Why are you undertaking such a journey that can disrupt you obligatory matters of faith? When you are aware that because of your traveling on business to that place your taqwa (piety) is affected, then you must avoid such travel"

When attending a gathering is permissible, but there is likelihood of undesirable things happening there, then it is better to avoid attending the party.

But all these doubts and confusions are for people with weak faiths, a man

.of piety will never falter from the right course

The Material Capacities

There are certain permissible acts that might make a person commit haram actions. He thinks that in a material sense these acts have lot of meaning. Although an act might be mustahab (desirable) or mubah (permissible) the man of piety keeps a close watch on its implications and consequences. He seriously considers what effect the performance of the act might have on him. Then only he ventures to embark on .performing it

In our daily lives why there is waste and profligacy? What use spending lives on unproductive acts? When people don't help their poor relatives and friends cutting into their legitimate expenses, and make heavy expenses through loans on pomp and show, their prayers are nothing short of hypocrisy. They may not be rewarded in the .Hereafter

Taking interest in the pleasures of life is not haram. It is in fact legitimate and permissible. But when such things are given unnecessary importance, there can be the likelihood of Qata ar-Rahm or depriving the near of kin of their legitimate rights and privileges. Even sometimes people fulfill their desire for pomp by meeting the high expenses with loans. Thus they might incur the risk of rendering their acts .Haram

Another example is that good humor is permissible. In certain circumstances it is desirable too. But we see that in excess, this permissible act ends into practical jokes and results in the heart- burn for the persons who are the subject of the humor. This

.can be tantamount to hurting the feelings of Mu'minīn and is Haram

Therefore it is necessary to adopt Taqwa and extravagant indulgence in the material .needs and excessive jest and humor must be avoided

:In a nutshell, there are three stages of taqwa

.Firstly: mastery in avoiding sins

.Secondly: Mastery in abstaining from the doubtful and the unbecoming things

.Thirdly: avoiding such permissible acts that might be the precursors of sins

The Fourteenth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see ((aright). (Al-Aaraf ٧:٢٠١

The second aspect of Isti'adha is Tadhakkur, the remembrance and talk about Allah (S.w.T.). A person who acquires Taqwa or piety becomes free of the domination of Satan. As long as the influence of Satan on the person persists, he remains incapable of effective Isti'adha. Satan keeps going round the hearts of the men of piety to catch a chance of entering therein. But when these pious persons busy themselves in the Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.), then there is a lightning of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Blessing and the net spread by Satan becomes visible to them in the momentary illumination. This .puts the pious persons out of harms way

Now, let us consider what is Allah (S.w.T.)'s intent about Tadhakkur in the oft-quoted .verse during our discussions

(.The Thought of Sin and Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T

In Tafseer al-Burhan commenting ٠n this Verse, Imam

Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) quotes from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) an incident that we are summarizing here. When a mu'min suddenly gets the thought of crime in his mind, Satan and his retainers make their maximum efforts to make the person put his thought to action. But in that moment the pious person remembers Allah (S.w.T.) and .he abandons the thought of committing the sin

There are also stages of Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) that are different according to the place and the situation. One of those situations is that when the thought of sin comes in the mind of the person, the instigator and prompter is Satan and the opposition of this enemy is necessary. And also the pious person is in oath with Allah (S.w.T.) that he will not follow Satan because the accursed creature is his sworn enemy. He should therefore not break his oath and instead of becoming 'Abd ar-Rahman (worshipper of Allah (S.w.T.)) become 'Abd ash-Shaitan (worshipper of Satan). Therefore, it is imperative that he keeps firmly to his oath and he should strive .to resist Satan who can only bring destruction and perfidy

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِى آدَمَ أَن لَّا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

Did I not charge you, O children of Adam ! that you should not serve the Shaitan? (Surely he is your open enemy. (Sura Ya Sin, ۳۶:۶۰

وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيراً أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ

And certainly he led astray numerous people from among you. What! Will you not then understand. (Sura

(Ya Sin, ۳۶:۶۲

At another place in the Holy Qur'an it is said that Allah (S.w.T.) has decided that those who follow Satan, Satan will push them into the abyss of darkness and take them into the blistering Fires of Hell. When a person adopts satanic thoughts and considers the temptations of Iblis worth pursuing, then Allah (S.w.T.) closes all the avenues of salvation for him and consigns him to the Hell.

Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) Relieves From Satanic Fears

Whenever satanic fears start getting into the heart, the man of piety busies himself in remembering Allah (S.w.T.). He thinks that if he committed the sin, he will be pushed away from Allah (S.w.T.)'s Blessing. What use will be the wretched life then!

It is quite possible that Satan, in his renewed attempt, puts a thought in the heart of the person that he was depriving himself of the pleasure of sin. The door of repentance was always open for him. The man of piety will then reply to Satan that what is the guarantee that he will get the chance of offering penitence for the sin. Even if he is able to do it, what is the surety that it would be accepted? In the end the Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) doesn't allow Satan to gain an upper hand over the man of piety.

Sometimes Satan puts a fear in the heart of the man of Taqwa that he was encouraging him to commit only a minor sin.

But the heart busy in remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.) replies, "Run away! You

".accursed one! Disobedience Allah (S.w.T.), anyhow, is a major sin

Sometimes Iblis the accursed threatens the man of piety that if he didn't comply with his advice, his end will be very pitiable. Sometimes he gives him false hopes that the results of sins will be good. Satan's advice influences only those who befriend him .((Satan

إِنَّمَا ذَٰلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ

(It is only the Shaitan that causes you to fear from his friends.... (Sura Aal Imran, ٣:١٧٥

But the man of piety gets the understanding with Remembrance of Allah (S.w.T.). The disturbing thoughts that come to the mind are only the doubts and fears created by Satan. The man of Taqwa, no doubt, fears only Allah (S.w.T.). Allah (S.w.T.) says at the :end of the Verse

"!(Fear only Me if you are a believer (mu'min"

Being Proud of One's Prayers and Supplications

Sometimes Satan tricks men into becoming proud of their prayers and the love for the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.). For example, he says, "How nice! You have gone on several pilgrimages to Karbala al-Mu'alla! You must have done innumerable good deeds during the visits to the Holy place. Husayn (a.s.) will certainly intercede on your behalf. ".Now, no sin can bring retribution to you

But the mu'min instead of becoming proud and conceited with such praises, should reply, "If I commit any sins, my intercessors {the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.)} will be upset with me. This sin will become a curtain between me and Imam Husayn (a.s.). Allah (S.w.T.) only knows how far I would be pushed away from my intercessors

by committing one sin! Feeling proud of the felicity of the ziyarat of Imam Husayn ".(a.s.) in itself is a sin that might deprive me of his (the Imam's) intercession

A man of Taqwa can certainly be proud of its spiritual felicity, but the pride can only be manifested as Tashakkur or gratefulness. This expression of gratitude will not require any sermonizing from outside. Sermonizing becomes necessary when the person himself is not aware of his felicity and feels no urge to express his gratefulness to the Creator for that. Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) says, "Truly felicitous person is one "!who is the preacher and sermonizer for himself

Satanic Fears in a State of Anger

It happens that people sometimes become angry while they have a heated exchange of words. As a result of the altercation one might use abusive language. Satan tempts the other party to reciprocate in the same language and tenor. But if he is a man of Taqwa, he immediately controls himself by Remembering Allah (S.w.T.). His mind suggests to him that if he behaved the same way as the opponent had behaved, then .what would be the difference between the two

The opponent had used uncouth language and had followed the dictates of Satan. If you do likewise, you too will render yourself the follower of Satan. With the beneficence of Dhikr of Allah (S.w.T.) his conscience will guide him to give a befitting :reply to the opponent

وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

(and when the ignorant address them, they say: Peace. (Sura al-Furqan, ۲۵:۶۳

It is

better because of the Dhikr of Allah (S.w.T.), the person is able to dispel the fear and confusion from his mind. Otherwise, the dispute can become a haranguing contest, each flinging foul-words on the other and might even result in physical assault. If, at the rudimentary stage of the dispute, effort was made to cool down the other party, !the matter could have been sorted out without much ado

Now we can see at length how people get entangled in the web of Satan. Even those who call themselves men of taqwa are not immune from this. If they don't busy .themselves in Tadhakkur, they most likely would fall in the trap sometime or other

Presence of a moralizer and preacher is absolutely necessary for the heart of every person to keep him warned not to become a victim of false pride and abstain from childish actions. Remember! A real man is one who always keeps the end in view. For example, when one keeps his cool during a heated argument with another person, the matter can be sorted out amicably. If this amicable nature is not there, how many persons would suffer tremendous losses fighting over trivial things with a sense of false pride. In such disputes Satan plays a very crucial role to create rifts and .commission of sins by the litigants

It is necessary for every mu'min to keep the intercession of Tadhakkur in his daily life. In the past there were such Mu'minīn who dug their own graves during

their life times and used to recite the Holy Qur'an sitting inside these trenches. They did this to remind themselves of the Hereafter and the interior of the graves was .illuminated with the felicity of Tadhakkur

About Hizqeel

It is narrated that when Hadrat Dawood (a.s.) committed his initial fault, and he went lamenting through hills and dales in penitence, he reached the cave inside which .Prophet Hadrat Hizqeel (a.s.) was busy in supplication

When Hadrat Hizqeel (a.s.) heard the moaning of the hills and the beasts, he understood that Hadrat Dawood (a.s.) had come to him. The reason for this was that when Hadrat Dawood (a.s.) recited the Zaboor, the flora, fauna and the stones too joined him in the recitation. Hadrat Dawood (a.s.) reached the entrance of the cave and called, "O Hizqeel (a.s.)! Do you permit me to come up to you?" Hadrat Hizqeel (a.s.) said, "Please don't come to me because you are a sinner!" But Allah (S.w.T.) sent a Revelation to him, "Because of Dawood (a.s.)'s first sin, don't reprimand him. To the contrary pray to Us for his pardon and well being! Whenever we leave anyone to his "!own scruples, he might commit a mistake

Now Hadrat Hizqeel (a.s.) caught hold of Hadrat Dawood (a.s.)'s hand and guided him .inside the cave

Hadrat Dawood (a.s.) asked Hadrat Hizqeel (a.s.), "O Hizqeel (a.s.)! Have you ever "?thought of committing a sin

"!He replied, "No! Never

"?Hadrat Dawood (a.s.) asked, "Did you ever feel proud

"!He replied, "No! Never

Hadrat Dawood (a.s.) asked, "Have

you ever been tempted with the worldly pleasures?”

Hadrat Hizqeel (a.s.) replied, “Yes! I was tempted!”

Hadrat Dawood (a.s.) asked, “Then! What remedy you use against these temptations?”

He replied, “In such circumstances I get into this cave and take pity from what I witness therein.”

Hadrat Dawood (a.s.) then entered into the recesses of the cave with Hadrat Hizqeel (a.s.) He found inside there a plate of steel. On the plate was lying a human skeleton and beside it was a tablet of steel on which was inscribed:

“I Arwai Bin Shalam

ruled for a thousand years,

established a thousand cities,

deflowered a thousand virgins.

But,

My condition is this

That my bed is dust

My pillow a stone

And

My body is the

Dwelling place of

Insects and vermin.

Whoever sets eye on me

Should not be carried away

(With worldly attractions!"(١)

A Bed of Two Hands Full of Dust

Imagine a person who was an emperor of great pomp and pageant, was reduced to be put in a desolate cave and his mortal remains were lying on a steel sheet in dust. He had insects and vermin crawling all over his mortal remains. A mu'min must take a lesson from this incident. If he had obeyed Satan and his baser instincts, and ran after the worldly things, how long will the party last? A person who strives too hard for his selfish ends forgets that he has to die inevitably and all the paraphernalia that he accumulates will have to be left behind. He should pray that whatever benefits and blessings he enjoyed, his end should not be like of the mighty king whose story

---

Ref: Ain al-Hayat, Page ١٧٨ -١

.is narrated here

Our topic of discussion is Tadhakkur. A person who leaves himself uncontrolled and doesn't remember Allah (S.w.T.), h will he will be nowhere (like a rudder less ship). Man should strive to be like a mountain in his moral behavior. One who is vulnerable to the wave of doubts created by Satan, He should ensure that the glitter of the world doesn't overwhelm him. This is possible if he keeps in mind the inevitable end that !every mortal being is destined to

Visit the Cemeteries is a Must

It is very necessary that one's own conscience becomes his warner. In the Islamic Shari'ah it has been very strongly prescribed to visit the graves, particularly those of one's parents. Why this exhortation? This is because one recitation al-Fatiha at the graveside of his parents will result in rewards for them. He should give sadaqa (alms) for the propitiation of their souls. The Prophet (S) has asked people to visit the grave of their parents that it is the place from where prayers made by them will be .answered

The biggest benefit of visiting the graves of the parents is that it will make the person aware of the fact if the parent is not there with him, he too will have to follow suit some time in the future. This will give him the realization that he should not be attracted much to the transient world. He will then learn to dispel the satanic fears and apprehensions. He will start remembering Allah (S.w.T.) and think of the

!Day of Judgment

Hadrat Fatima Zahra (a.s.) at the Graveside of Her Grand Uncle

Hadrat Fatima Zahra (a.s.), after the sad demise of her father (S), had to experience very audacious treatment from some persons that she fell ill under the pressure of these happenings. Even then, on every Monday and Thursday, with the permission of her husband (a.s.), she visited the grave of her great-uncle, Hadrat Hamza and other .martyrs in Uhud

Even the Prophet (S) during his last illness, despite severe fever and weakness, used to ask some persons to put their shoulders under his arms and take him to the .graveyard

O Allah (S.w.T.)! Do make us Ahl adh-Dhikr wat-Tadhakkur, in the name of .(.Muhammad (S) and his Holy Progeny (a.s

The Fifteenth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَواْ إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُواْ فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْصِرُونَ

Verily those who guard (themselves against evil) when an evil thought from Satan afflicts them, they become mindful (of God and get awakened) then lo! They see ((aright). (Sura al-A'raaf, ٧:٢٠١

Last evening our talk dwelt on the second aspect of Isti'adha, Tadhakkur. Today we shall discuss some more meanings of Tadhakkur in respect of the fears created by .Satan

There is a tradition of the Prophet (S), the authenticity of which is universally accepted by all the schools of thought. The tradition has also been quoted very much. The Prophet (S) has said, "Actions are of three types: the actions of righteous guidance, the misleading actions and the actions that are mid way between the first

".two categories

The Things That Are Definitely Good: The Actions of Righteous Guidance

Whatever thoughts come to the mind of a person whether to perform an action or not, depend on the consideration of the three categories of actions mentioned above. If it is sure that the action that a person is about to perform is certainly good, and to his righteous advantage, then pure feelings will develop in his heart. He will get the urge to go ahead with the performance of the act. If you have such feelings about any act that you wish to perform, and you are sure that it is a hundred percent virtuous deed, and you don't have the slightest doubt or fear about its veracity, then you must go ahead doing it with full determination and firmness. Such actions are deemed .obligatory to be performed tacitly

Actions That Are Definitely Wrong: The Misleading Actions

If you get the thought of performing an action about which you are certain that it is satanic, and you know that it's performance might cause unrest, despite the urge to go ahead with it, you must have access to Tadhakkur and abstain from doing it. Because of your awareness of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Commandments, if you consider doing such acts as prohibited, it will be a befitting precept in total consonance with the .(words "...fa idha hum mubseroon" (...then lo! They see aright) (Sura al-A'raaf, ۷:۲۰۱

When There Is A Doubt About Acts: Whether Righteous Or Prohibited

The third type of actions is about which one is not sure whether they are righteous (Rahmani) or wrong (Shaitani). There are certain lawful acts about which we have doubts in our minds. We

.have to arrive at a decision whether to perform them or not

Those who are perfect in piety, are the choicest in the reckoning of Allah (S.w.T.). Their intuition tells them whether an act is really good or not. Their vision is so powerful that they have a clear understanding of what act is Rahmani and which is Satanic. But such .men of high piety are few and far between

Care is the Guarantee of Deliverance

Those who are in the lower rungs of the roster of men of piety, they too draw benefit from Tadhakkur and don't decide to perform an act till they are sure and confident that it is righteous (Rahmani). They will not do it till they are doubly sure howsoever attractive it might seem to them. They are conscious that performing the act, ignorantly, might harm their faith. Therefore it is said, "Qif indash Shubh - When you have a doubt about an act being Rahmani or Satanic, better wait!" The morsel about which one has doubt whether it is halal or Haram, he should rather wait till he makes it .sure

The Touchstone

In the Islamic Shari'ah there are clear-cut norms for removing doubts and fears and for arriving at the righteousness or otherwise of acts. These norms must be brought to the knowledge of people of piety that they can abide by them. The standard set by the revered and Infallible personalities is: Every act that is to satisfy the psyche of the person will be Satanic. And the act that is contrary to

.his desire will be righteous and Rahmani

There are certain acts towards which the psyche is attracted. For example: A person has to go on a journey that is not against his liking, but he doesn't know if the action has the approval of Allah (S.w.T.) or not. Or perhaps Satan is instigating him to go on the trip. Sometimes the man is inordinately attracted to take a journey. In such a situation he should realize that the initiator of the idea is definitely some satanic thought that wishes to involve him in some Haram act or at least to deprive him of a .legitimate act

When you feel that your conscience is not willing to perform some act, then it is a .Rahmani instinct, you must go ahead in performing it

Another thing should not remain hidden that this standard is not for everyone. Because mostly people are inclined towards human desires and these realities have .nothing to do with them

Istikhara, Or Augury, Guides in Situations of Doubt

It has been narrated that when you are at the cross-roads, and do not know which is the righteous (Rahmani) way and which is the wrong one (Shaitani), then doing .Istikhara (augury) with Allah (S.w.T.) that the righteous path can be determined

Istikhara, or augury, is talab al-khair min Allah (S.w.T.) (Seeking good from Allah (S.w.T.)) saying, "O Allah (S.w.T.)! I am in doubt. I don't know if there is Your approval

for my doing this task or not. With Your Munificence make evident Your guidance in the matter."

This is a situation of

p: ١٠٧

.(.prayer, and in Istikhara always there is a strong element of prayer to Allah (S.w.T

Some People Misunderstand Istikhara

Muslims have adopted a bad habit that they started using Istikhara for matters connected with monetary benefit. This, truly, is not istikhara. Istikhara, in fact, is a prayer by virtue of which a person seeks Allah (S.w.T.)'s wish if performance of a .particular act would be in his best interest or not

(Imam Husayn (a.s.) does Istikhara at the Mausoleum of The Prophet (S

Imam Husayn (a.s.) went to the mausoleum of his grand father, the Prophet (S) and after much grieving entreated Allah (S.w.T.), "O my Sustainer! You know I am practicing, amr bil ma'ruf and nahi 'anil munkar, treading on the righteous path and denying the prohibited. In this matter kindly give me guidance." Then the Prophet (S), with Allah (S.w.T.)'s orders, informed Imam Husayn (a.s.) that he had to proceed .towards Karbala

It is better we quote here Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (a.s.). He says in one of the :supplications in Sahifa as-Sajjadiya

O Allah! Whenever my heart is confused with two thoughts. One thought for" performance of an act that might be approved by You and the other, perhaps, not to Your liking and instigated by Satan. Then O Allah! Mould my determination and "!decision the way You approve of

Istikhara With the Sibha or Through the Holy Qur'an

If prayer dispels your doubts and confusion, it is very well. Otherwise, you are within your rights to do Istikhara with the Sibha (rosary) or from the pages of the Holy Qur'an. But there are two conditions for doing this. One is that you must be in a state

of supplication while doing the augury (Istikhara). The other condition is that you can correctly understand the meanings of the verses of the Qur'an when doing Istikhara through its pages. One should also be in a position to interpret the correct purport .from the meanings

Strange Stories About Istikhara

In Isfahan an important person suffered from measles. After treatment he was put on a strict diet regimen. He was particularly warned against over eating. During his period of convalescence he was invited at the place of a leading cleric. When the table was arranged with numerous types of mouth -watering dishes, the person's mouth started watering. But he also had the fear that if he went against the regimen and ate well, it might be harmful for him. He also thought that if he didn't eat properly, the host might feel bad. He therefore did Istikhara from the Qur'an. He saw the ۶۹th verse :of Sura an Nahl when he opened the book

ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلاً

Then eat of all the fruits and walk thou in the ways of Thy Lord submissively... (Sura (an-Nahl, ۱۶:۶۹

This verse relates to the honeybees that received revelation to eat from all the fruits and manufacture lot of honey. The person interpreted from the verse that he had the permission to eat. Since he was on a strict diet for many days, he enjoyed all the sumptuous fare with great relish. The excess of eating resulted in deterioration of his condition and he had to go

straight to his grave from the party!

After this event when there was a discussion about Istikhara, one scholar said, “The verse seen during the Istikhara pertains to the honeybees that pick up a little nectar from each flower. If the person had also tasted a little from each of the dishes served, and not eaten like a glutton, he would have suffered no harm.”

The purpose of relating this tale is to impress on people that doing Istikhara and interpreting the meaning and purport from the verses is not easy. This can be done only by the learned.

The Purpose of Revelation of the Holy Qur’an is not for Istikhara

The Holy Qur’an is not revealed for the purpose of Istikhara but for the understanding of Allah (S.w.T.) by His creatures and for inculcating the high moral values. Its purpose is not to show to the reader whether any worldly actions are beneficial to him or not. Such reference to the Book is not Istikhara; but it is soothsaying.

The standards prescribed for us to judge the veracity or usefulness of acts has to be understood properly and to be acted upon implicitly. Every matter that appears burdensome on the baser instincts of a person is Rahmani, legitimate. Spending in the way of Allah (S.w.T.) doesn’t make a person poor, although his instinct asks him to take care while making such expense!

With the compliance of aforementioned conditions, we are not in opposition to access to Istikhara. After every compulsory prayer we supplicate, “O Allah (S.w.T.)! With your Munificence and Grace guide me!” This supplication should

be made with the single purpose of asking for His Grace. In fact one should pray to Allah (S.w.T.) thus, "O Allah! Keep me safe from perfidy and shame! O Allah! Prevent ."me from the influence of evil thoughts and keep me under Your protection

Doing Soothsaying from The Holy Qur'an is Not Proper

Such Istikhara and soothsaying from the Qur'an that is for the purpose of predicting the future are not permissible. For example: When a mother has to get her daughter wedded, gets an Istikhara to ascertain how the girl's future will be. For this purpose she goes to a venerable person. He predicts that the future for the marriage is not going to be good. The mother then worries. Then she goes to another person. He predicts that the match is good and augurs well for the future. She is now confused. She thinks how the same thing could get diametrically opposite result when she asked .for a Istikhara for the same

She must therefore seriously think about the premise on which she sought such a .prediction. She should seek the answer from the sacred Shari'ah

Publications about Istikhara

Allama Majlisi has written a treatise "Mafatīh al-Ghaib" in which he has entered a collection of traditions about Istikhara. Other scholars too have published essays. .Even then people are ignorant about the true facts

Allama Majlisi, in the beginning of the book, has written about the merits of Istikhara and the need for it. He quotes some narratives to prove that one has to seek Allah .(S.w.T.)'s help in all matters

Types of Istikhara

For every

task that you undertake, you should seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s support and pray for good .end to your efforts. Whatever the end result, remain consigned to Allah (S.w.T.)'s wish

After seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s support, rivet your attention to your heart and act .according to the signal you get from there

After seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s support, consult some sagacious Mu'min and act on the .matter according to his advice

.Do Istikhara through the Qur'an, the rosary, through chits or marble like balls

The Allama says that, "In several traditions there is a pointer towards the first type of Istikhara. Several other scholars, like Shaikh Mufīd, Allama Tūsi and Ibn Idrīs are hesitant about the fourth type of Istikhara. But, since there are traditions in support of all the four types of Istikhara, we cannot reject any of the four methods. Any way, the first three ways of doing the Istikhara are very appropriate, which in our times are ".almost defunct

Several youths came during their examination times and want a Istikhara to be done whether they stand a chance of passing the examination or not. In brief, we want to mention about the edict of Shari'ah in such matters. We request you to communicate these words to others in your circle that people better shun their wrong ways and do .not pollute their faith with silly habits

Clear Warnings about Istikhara

About Istikhara all schools agree that the Prophet (S) has advised that this should not .be avoided for any small or big task

Amir al-Mu'minīn (a.s.) says, "During

my journey to Yemen, on which I went on the orders of the Prophet (S), besides other instructions, he said, ‘O ‘Ali! During this journey never forget to see the Istikhara at every stage.’ One who does Istikhara will never have troubles nor one who consults ”.others will ever repent

Every Imam has exhorted his successor about the Istikhara as he has done about the .recitation of the Qur’an

This Istikhara about which so much has been said is not just seeing the odd and even of the beads of the rosary. But the purpose is to seek good from Allah (S.w.T.) (Talab al-khaira min Allah). In every task that you do, you must seek Allah (S.w.T.)’s help and !pleasure

There are several traditions about the method and prayer for Istikhara. One is that for routine works, one should say seven times, “Astakhair Allah berehmate khairat fi .”aafiah

For important matters like travel, business deals or surgeries repeat the same words a hundred and one times. If the words are said in a state of prostration, it would be better. And if the words are repeated in the prostration after a optional prayer, and .(better after the optional prayer following the mandatory morning prayer (Fajr

In another tradition it is narrated from Imam Zayn al-’Abidin (a.s.) that the words of Istikhara should be repeated ten times for routine matters and two hundred times for .important matters like journeys, Umrah etc

People have been very strongly advised to seek help in their matters from

Allah (S.w.T.) in a state of prostration. That is the time when one is nearest to Allah (S.w.T.). If men make this their habit and practice, and never divert from it, then all actions will be felicitous. If a person has any doubt about this, he should study in depth the methods for removing the doubts recorded in the pure Shari'ah.

Suggestions for Removing Doubts

The best suggestion is that which is in according to the Nass (categorical order) of the Qur'an, and that is not to take advise from any person other than one falling in the four following categories:

١. Wise, shrewd and far-sighted. It goes without saying that seeking suggestions from foolish persons will be futile.

٢. One who is religious and pious. Seeking suggestions from a faithless and careless person is not desirable. When a person doesn't care for Allah (S.w.T.), how one can expect that he would care for ordinary mortals?

٣. One who is your friend and well-wisher. A person who is one's adversary cannot give advice in your interest.

۴. A person who is your confidante and will not disclose about your matters to others.

If any person has all the four qualities, he can always be consulted on important matters. Allah (S.w.T.), from whom you have sought help in your matters, will convey to you through the advice of the person of your choice about the best course you must adopt in your matters.

The Holy Imams (a.s.) Used to Take Advice

Allama Majlisi quotes from Imam Ridha (a.s.) that he said, “My revered father, Imam Mūsa Ibn

p: ۱۱۴

Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.), despite being of the highest intellect, used to consult with his slave occasionally. For example: Whenever he embarked on some important task, he used to seek the advice of the clever slave. If performance of that task was advisable, ".he would go ahead with it

The Imam was once asked by some one, 'Although you are the Imam of the times," you are taking advice from a slave! Being the Imam you should have knowledge of everything.' He replied, 'what do you know? Is it not possible that Allah wishes to "'?enlighten me about certain matters through his mouth

Whenever one is in a doubt and confusion about matters, he should act in accordance with Allah (S.w.T.)'s injunction in the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet and .(.the Imams (a.s

Istikhara Through Chits

At times when no advice is available or the available advice doesn't agree with that given by other equally competent persons, For example: you have taken the advice of a person keeping in mind the four established norms and he approved of your contention. The same matter, when referred to another person of the same competence was not approved by him. In such an event, to remove the doubt and :confusion, you will have to follow the following procedure

Take six equal pieces or chits of paper. On each chit write, "Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem. Khairum minal laahil hakeem li fulaan bin (or 'bint' instead of 'bin' for a woman) fulaan (write your and your father's names in place of

the ۱st and ۲nd fulaan).” Then on three of the chits write, “’If’al” (meaning ‘do!’) and on .(’!the remaining three write, “la taf’al” (meaning ‘don’t do

Keep all the six chits under the prayer mat and offer two rakaat of Istikhara prayer. After the salutation or during the last prostration of the prayer recite a hundred times the following words, “Asta-khiru llaahi birahmatihi khairat fi ‘aafiya” Now that the prayer is complete, retrieve the chits from under the mat and shuffle them. After this exercise pick the chits one after the other. If on three consecutive chits it is inscribed, “If’al”, then it is very good and you can go ahead with the performance of the task you intend to. If three consecutive chits have written on them, “La taf’al”, then you will have to abstain from doing the task. If you have picked up five chits, one after the other, alternatively with the inscription of “If’al” and “la ta’fal” alternately in that order, then if three of the five chits have written “If’al” on them, then you must go ahead with your task. But if three of these chits have inscribed on them “La ta’fal” then you .must refrain from performing the task

It is better if the chits are of the same paper, of the same color and of the same .dimension

If a person doesn’t have time for the Salat al-Istikhara and the prayers mentioned ,above. Then, if he has good comprehension of the verses of the Holy Qur’an

and is capable of interpretation of the verses, in relation to the task for which the .Istikhara is being performed, he can as well make access to the Qur'an for his augury

Shaikh Tūsi (r.a) has narrated in his book "Tahdhíb" that Yasa Bin Abd Allah al-Qummi came one day to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) and said, "I intend to perform a task but I am unable to arrive at a firm decision for or against doing it." The Imam (a.s.) said, "When you stand up with the intention of prayer, then think what your heart feels about the matter. Act on that; because that is the time when Satan is the farthest away from the man. Or you can open the pages of the Holy Qur'an at that time and ".act according to the interpretation you derive from the verse that meets your eyes

Doing Istikhara for Others

The practice of our times is to write nek (Farsi for "auspicious") or bud (unfavorable) on the Holy Qur'an, or we approach a scholar for doing the Istikhara. Allama Majlisi says that even for the sake of example we don't have any tradition of the Prophet (S) or the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) that a Shi'ah went to any Imam (a.s.) for the purpose of Istikhara. Therefore, there is no precedent that can be quoted in support of our practice in this matter. There are certain clerics who don't agree to do Istikhara for others. But Allama Majlisi and some other scholars approve that those who cannot do

the Istikhara themselves, can nominate another capable person as wakīl (representative) to open the Holy Book and do the Istikhara for him. The condition is that the person who opens the Book should be in proper physical condition at the time and is conversant with the meanings of the verses of the Qur'an.

Many jurists consider istikhara as not legitimate. They say that there is no need to do the Istikhara and one must act and trust his affairs to the Will of Allah (S.w.T.).

The conclusion is that we shall seek good (khair) from Allah (S.w.T.) in our affairs and that is the crux of Istikhara.

The Sixteenth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord. (Sura An-Nahl, ١۶:٩٩)

Tawakkul or Trust in Allah (S.w.T.) Essential Part of Practicing Monotheism

The topic of Tawakkul is one of the most important of the aspects of the religion of Islam because the essential part of monotheism is absolute trust in Allah (S.w.T.). In other words a Muslim is one who seeks succor only from Allah (S.w.T.) for deriving benefits and warding off of losses. In fact this is the meaning and purport of la ilaaha

illallah (S.w.T.) wa laa hawla wa laa quwwata illa billaahil 'Alliyil Adheem. Hawqala or saying laa hawla wa laa quwwata illa billah is the key to the Heaven and the practical expression of monotheism by the believer. Thus it is the

expression by the person that he is not an independent entity who has to depend on Allah (S.w.T.)'s wish in all matters. It is his duty to believe in the Musabbib al-asbaab (the Causer of causes), that is Allah (S.w.T.), the Creator of the Existence.

He should realize and believe in the fact that with the utterance of a single word, "Kun", became the cause of creation of the creatures in the Universe. He should also have belief in the fact that the very existence of the universe is the miraculous phenomenon of the Musabbib al-Haqeeqi or the real doer of things and the absolute Creator, that is Allah (S.w.T.) and not something that evolved by itself.

Dependence on Allah (S.w.T.) for the Success of the Tasks That One Strives to Do

Man must strive to achieve objectives but he must leave the success or failure of his efforts to Musabbib al-asbaab. The source of strength for the worldly gains or losses and the rewards in the Hereafter for the person should be the absolute trust in Allah (S.w.T.). His faith about the worldly affairs should be that if Allah (S.w.T.) wished he would certainly be successful in his efforts. About the rewards of the Hereafter, he should always remember that he has to abide by Allah (S.w.T.)'s commands implicitly and trust in His beneficence.

Allah (S.w.T.) commands that man must strive for his worldly affairs, but he should be away from greed and avarice. He should definitely make efforts to acquire the worldly comforts but he should not go near prohibited things. When a person's

attorney wants him to bring all his documents to the court, can he refuse to do that? When he has thought that he is incapable of handling his case himself, he has retained the attorney. Then he has to trust him and proceed according to the advice tendered .by him

Essential to Have a Wakil or Attorney

O man! You are helpless and cannot be successful in this world nor in the hereafter on your own! If you have trust in a power, then in times of trouble you will not be shaky .because your Wakil is there to help you

Don't you recite in a supplication after your daily prayers (Ta'qeeb) the following words: "Tawakkaltu 'alal hayyil ladhi la yamoot" (I trust my affairs to the Ever Living .(and Undying Allah

He is the Greatest Wakil and the best help - Ni'm al-Wakil, ni'm al-Mawla wa ni'm an-.Naseer

(.Satan Runs Away From The Mutawakkil or the One Resigned to the Will of Allah (S.w.T

It has been narrated that when a person stirs out of his house in the morning, the satans will be waiting for him at the threshold. But when he steps out of the house and says, "Aamantu billahi tawakkaltu 'alal laahi – I believe in Allah and I place my trust on .Allah." Then the satans will slink away

These words can be said in any language, it doesn't matter. The words are a support for the heart and surety for the life of the person. It is a fact that if you trust your Wakil, He is Omnipotent and can keep away from you all difficulties and hardships. He

will help

p: ۱۲۰

you get all the profits that He deems are legitimate. There is none more generous and .(.powerful than Allah (S.w.T

Ibn Zubair's Rebellion After the Event of Karbala

At this juncture I remember a tradition quoted in the Usūl al-Kafi. Abdullah Bin Zubair, who was one of the sworn enemies of the Progeny of the Prophet (S), and even in the sermon of the Friday prayers he avoided saying the Durood (benediction) on the Prophet (S). When people protested against this practice, he said, "Benediction on the Prophet (S) is void without reference to his progeny. But if I refer to his progeny in the "!sermon, then many will lose their necks

Coming back to the main subject: after the event of Karbala, Abdullah bin Zubair rose in rebellion in Mecca al-Mukarrama and made a claim for the Caliphate. Some groups .from Iraq joined him and slightly improved his strength

The accursed Yazid, who was looking for an opportunity that some one raised his voice to give a justification for his harassing the people with an iron fist. Abdullah bin .Zubair gave him this opportunity by claiming control over the Hijaz

Yazid then sent Muslim bin Uqba and Haseen bin Namīr with a huge force towards Hijaz and asked them to go via Madina al-Munawwara and make a general massacre .there to the maximum possible extent

Imam Zayn Al-'Abidin and a Saintly Personality

On one hand there was the scheming of Ibn Zubair and on the other Yazid's hordes. It was only after a few days of the tragic events of Karbala that Sayyid as-Sajjad (a.s.) had returned home

to Madina. He was very worried of the developments and expressed his fears to Abu Hamza on the matter in the following words: “I emerged out of my home and reclined on this wall (perhaps, by wall he means the ramparts of the city of Madina). Suddenly I :noticed a person clad in two pieces of white cloth that stood in front of me and said

Ali bin al-Husayn! What is the reason that you look worried? Are you worried“" because of worldly difficulties? If such is the case, you should not worry because Allah ”.is the sustainer and gives livelihood to all

”!I replied, “I don’t have any care for the world

The man asked, “Then, are you worried for the Hereafter? Then this matter too is not ”!to worry about! Allah’s promise is true and He will support you

.I am not concerned about the Hereafter either!” I replied“

.Then why do you look worried?” the man asked“

”.I said, “I am worried about the intrigues of Ibn Zubair

The Imam (a.s.) was worried because of the machinations of that sworn enemy of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and the attack of the hordes of Yazid. The third fear, which was not .unfounded, was the attack by Hajjaj on the orders of Abdul Malik

The person laughed and said, ‘Have you seen anyone who trusted Allah, and Allah has not helped him? Have you ever seen a person who has spread his hand to Allah for ”?help and Allah has sent him disappointed

,The Imam (a.s.) said

"No!"

And the person disappeared from the view!

About this event Allama Majlisi says, "It was either a saintly personality, an angel or Hadrat Khidr (a.s.)."

Speaking for the Tranquility of the Heart

Allama Majlisi says that such conversations are in no way a remark on the high status of the Imams (a.s.) but are manifestations of Tadhakkur and spiritual reminder of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish to put the Imam (a.s.)'s heart at ease.

One example is that when an erudite scholar's son expires, people tell him to be patient that Imam Husayn (a.s.) too lost his son in the prime of youth. This is Tadhakkur. Sermonizing or moralizing is done irrespective of the age of the person who is the subject of this. The person who moralizes can be raw and young and the person he talks to could be highly learned and old! Sometimes it does happen that a child says something and an old and learned person draws benefit from the Tadhakkur of the infant!

Imam Husayn (a.s.) Talks to 'Ali Akbar

You must have heard that Hadrat Imam Husayn (a.s.), at one of the stages on the journey to Karbala woke up uneasily from his sleep. 'Ali Akbar said, "O father! What is the reason that you are disturbed?" The Imam (a.s.) replied, "I heard a herald announce that this group is advancing towards their death! This journey is for martyrdom and killings." 'Ali Akbar asked, "O father! Are we on the side of righteousness?" The Imam (a.s.) replied, "Definitely! We are on the side of the right!"

Ali Akbar rejoined, “If we are the travelers‘

p: ۱۲۳

on the path of righteousness, then how good it will be that we sacrifice our lives in the cause of Truth!"

Such words of wisdom from the mouth of the young son soothed the nerves of the Imam (a.s.) and he prayed to Allah (S.w.T.) to enable the youth to be Righteous!

The Seventeenth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord. ((Sura An-Nahl, ١۶:٩٩

Tawakkul is the Result of the Knowledge, Circumstances and the Actions of an Individual

The scholars and researchers are of opinion that Tawakkkul results from three things: the knowledge of the person, his circumstances and his actions. We shall talk about all the three aspects.

Knowledge: As long as a person is not learned, Tawakkul will not be in him. This will depend on three things. The first is Yaqeen or firm belief. The person should have absolute belief on Allah (S.w.T.)'s unfathomable power that He is "'Ala kulli shayyin Qadeer (all things are in His power) and "Qaadir 'ala kulli shayy" (wields power over all things). The most difficult tasks that man is unable to perform with all his capabilities, are very easy of accomplishment by Allah (S.w.T.). Nothing is there that is not in His Reach.

Yaqeen: Secondly, yaqeen or faith is imperative that Allah (S.w.T.) is ‘Aalam as-sirr wal-khafiyyat, He has knowledge of the manifest and the hidden. In other words, He .is Omniscient

Muntaha ash-shafaqat ‘ala ibaadihi: Thirdly, the person should have

the firm belief that Allah (S.w.T.) is utmost kind on His creatures. Mu'min is near and dear to Allah (S.w.T.). The instinctive love that a mother has for her child is also from Allah (S.w.T.). Allah (S.w.T.)'s love for His creatures is thousands of times more than a mother's love for her child. In fact, his love for the creatures is unfathomable. He is the Sustainer; He creates, trains, and loves those He has brought up with care. Many examples can be cited about this. But now we are quoting one narration from Hayat :al-Qulub of Allama Majlisi

Hadrat Nuh (a.s.) cursed his disobedient people. As a result of this curse, all the infidels got drowned in the flood. One angel came to Hadrat Nuh (a.s.). Hadrat Nuh (a.s.) was a potter. At the time when the angel came to him, he was busy on the potters-wheel making goblets and tempering them on fire. The angel bought all the goblets from Hadrat Nuh (a.s.) and started breaking them one after another. Hadrat Nuh (a.s.), surprised and upset, asked him why he was breaking the goblets. The angel said, "What right you have over the things that I have already paid for?" Hadrat Nuh (a.s.) said, "Don't you know that I had made the goblets with my own hands?" The angel rejoined, "You have only made the goblets, you have not created them! Even then you are upset at my breaking them. When you got so many creatures drowned in the ,floods

would not Allah (S.w.T.), the Creator, have felt upset and sad!" At this, as is quoted in 'Ilall ash-Sharay'i, Hadrat Nuh bowed down his head and wept so much that he was given the name of Nuh (one who wails) because of this.

The Prophet (S) Never Cursed Anyone

Allah (S.w.T.), therefore, is very kind on His creatures because, one who is the provider of sustenance has lots of love for those whom He brings up. Allah (S.w.T.) expresses His displeasure on one of His closest Prophets (a.s.) as to why he had cursed his people and caused their destruction.

The greatness of the Last of the Prophets, Hadrat Muhammad (S.), can be judged from the fact that he never cursed anyone throughout his life. He is therefore, Rahmatan lil 'Aalameen or Blessing for all the Worlds! If he had cursed the infidels and polytheists, they would have all perished.

An Example of Godly Affection

One day the infidels caused so much hurt to the Prophet (S) that he fell unconscious, and blood was flowing from his face and head. Someone informed Hadrat Khadija (s.a.) that her husband was assaulted by his enemies and caused him grievous injuries. They were wondering whether she would find him alive or not. That day the angels came to the Prophet (S) and asked him his wish. The Prophet (S), who is a blessing for all the worlds, did not ask for the punishment of the infidels but, to the contrary, he prayed for them in the following words: "O Allah (S.w.T.)! Guide my people aright!" In

addition to this, the Prophet (S) advocated for them that, “They are not aware that I am Your Annunciated Prophet. They are ignorant and I plead not to punish them!”

People Themselves Seek a Place in Hell

Don’t say that when the Prophet (S) is so forgiving, then why Allah (S.w.T.) had to create the Hell. The creation of the Hell is not contrary to Ash-shafaqat ‘alal ‘ibaad (compassion on the creation). Man himself flies away from the way of Allah (S.w.T.)’s love (Shafaqah) and rightly earns a place in the Hell.

إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَـكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

Surely Allah does not do any injustice to men, but men are unjust to themselves. (Sura Yunus, ۱۰:۴۴)

Allah (S.w.T.) loves them very much and keeps them warned repeatedly about the Hell through the verses of the Qur’an. He exhorts them to keep away from it. He also warns them against Satan’s tricks and that he is the open enemy of men.

In a nutshell, unless you realize that Allah (S.w.T.) is Omnipotent and Beneficent and has kindness and love for his creatures, you cannot achieve the state of Tawakkul.

Affection on a Kitten

In the Commentary, Ruh al-Bayan, it is said that someone dreamed of a pious person after his death and inquired about his condition. He said that one good turn had helped him very much. It was winter. In addition to extreme cold it was raining cats

and dogs. In the state of extreme cold he noticed a kitten in search of warmth and .shelter. It looked hungry and weak

He took pity on the kitten and picked it up and hid it in his coat of leather and took it home. There he fed the kitten and protected it from cold. When the weather improved, he freed the kitten. Allah (S.w.T.) had forgiven all his sins because of this .good turn of his

How much Allah (S.w.T.) must be getting pleased if one did such a good turn to a human being. There is another love much more superior mentioned in the Qur'an. That is the love for Allah (S.w.T.). Allah (S.w.T.) terms such persons His mahboob or the .Beloved

Therefore, the condition of knowledge is firm belief in affection for Allah (S.w.T.) and .that, because of this affection Allah (S.w.T.) loves you

Now the question is that despite all this why we don't depend (Tawakkul) on Allah (S.w.T.)? Is there anyone more dependable than Him in our view? Do we know any personality who is wiser than, stronger than and kinder than Allah (S.w.T.)? When !one's Allah (S.w.T.) is so forgiving, why should he seek the affection of anyone else

O Allah (S.w.T.)! Strengthen our hearts with the strength of belief that we make only you the focus of our expectations! Call only you in times of trouble and whenever Satan creates fears in our heart, we seek your protection! We keep trust only on Your support at every step in our lives. We mould ourselves into total Mu'minīn following the dictum of "if you are a mu'min do Tawakkul

"!(.on Allah (S.w.T

!(.What Satan Has To Do With Those Who Have Tawakkul Or Dependence On Allah (S.w.T

If you consider your Sustainer, Allah (S.w.T.), as the reservoir of all your strength, and thereby become a person with Tawakkul, that is, total dependence on Allah (S.w.T.), then Satan dare not have access to your heart! Here we are reminded of the example of the king's camp and the ferocious dog at its entrance. But one who is close to the king, will call from outside and orders would be given for his admittance. Similarly, if one has closeness with the Creator of the Universe, and has Tawakkul on Him, then .his Isti'adha too will be acceptable and Satan will never come near him

Friends of Allah (S.w.T.) Have no Anxiety from Satan

Men have several enemies. Whenever they become the people of Tawakkul, depending totally on Allah (S.w.T.), then all the enemies unite to oppose them. Confronting so many strong enemies is not easy. There is only one way of subduing them. That is Tawakkul (Dependence) on Allah (S.w.T.). When one depends totally on Allah (S.w.T.), then Satan's fears and temptations would mean trifling to him. "The ."friends of Allah neither fear anyone nor do they face any sadness or misery

Blade of Dried Grass or Straw

Unfortunate are those hapless persons who have no place of succor. They are just like the blades of straw that fly around with the gusts of the wind. Satan will rest only after destroying such persons. In contrast to these, the one who is powerful has .access to the Omnipotent Allah (S.w.T.), and only Allah (S.w.T.) is his succor

Our lives are fast running out of

.(.time. We should not remain deprived of Tawakkul on Allah (S.w.T

Tawakkul on Allah (S.w.T.) is Necessary in the Hereafter Too

As it is necessary to Trust on Allah (S.w.T.) during our worldly lives, then, whatever is in store for us in the Hereafter too we shall have to depend on Allah (S.w.T.) for his Beneficence. For this Tawakkul is most important. Allah (S.w.T.) is the Master of all our affairs – in the grave, in purgatory (Barzakh), on Qiyamat (Doomsday) and we have to depend on Him in all these stages. It is Allah (S.w.T.) who brought us from nothingness !(to the world and has been our Guardian till the Resurrection (Ma'ad

The Eighteenth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord. ((Sura an-Nahl, ١۶:٩٩

(.Tawakkul In Unity Of Allah (S.w.T

.(.A Mu'min has trust on (Tawakkul) and faith only in Allah (S.w.T

وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُواْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

(and on Allah should you rely if you are believers. (Sura al-Maidah, ۵:٢٣...

The importance of belief on the Unity of Allah (S.w.T.) is that Trust (Tawakkul) is

required to be placed only on Allah (S.w.T.)! Besides Allah (S.w.T.) one should not .depend on the help from any other human being or anything else

If the faith on the Unity of Allah (S.w.T.) is absolute, then people will not have any feelings of false pride. Fears, doubts and pride are the traits of those who are weak in their Faith. Mu'min is never swayed

in any circumstances because the reservoir of the strength of his heart is from Allah .(.(S.w.T

The result of Practicing Faith on Tawhid, Unity of Allah (S.w.T.), is that in matters of fear, hope and on occasions of confusion, the Trust on Allah (S.w.T.) (Tawakkul) is .redoubled and the faith of the Mu'min is further strengthened

Trust on Allah (S.w.T.) is Intellectually Binding

Mu'min trusting on Allah (S.w.T.) is doubtlessly justified. Even when matters are in his control, there should be implicit trust on Allah (S.w.T.). Only saying that one trusts Allah (S.w.T.) is not sufficient. Saying 'alayhi tawakkaltu wa ilayhi uneeb' or 'Uffawidhu amri ilallah', that is one leaves all his affairs to the trust of Allah (S.w.T.) is not sufficient. But for this there is necessity of Haal (rapture) and the state of dedication of the heart. One should remain steadfast on the three aspects of Tawakkul – 'Ilm (knowledge), haal (rapture) and 'amal (action). The foundation is no doubt laid on Ilm and the reality that is achieved through 'Amal (action) is Haal or rapturously, and elatedly trusting on .Allah (S.w.T.) in all the affairs

(.How is it Possible to be Mutawakkil or Resigned to the Will of Allah (S.w.T

What is the reality of Tawakkul and how to achieve that? The root of the word Tawakkul (Trust) is Wakala (counsel or representation). The person who appoints a counsel is called muwakkil and the counsel who is entrusted to take care of his affairs .is the wakil

Make Allah (S.w.T.) your wakil and Trust all your affairs to Him. This is the meaning of "Fattakhidhuhu wakila – make Him your Wakil

(.Belief in Practicing Faith on Unity of Allah (S.w.T

We have already

said that Tawakkul (Trust) depends on knowledge, rapture and action. But the foundation is the knowledge. Here knowledge means implicit practicing- faith in the Unity of Allah (S.w.T.) that every gain made or loss suffered by the person should be attributed to the Will of Allah (S.w.T.). For such a belief, there must be arguments in .support that the foundation of the Faith is firm

Is it possible to derive profits from others than Allah (S.w.T.)? No, never! Every profit accrued is either directly or through Allah (S.w.T.). Food, clothing and all the paraphernalia of marital life and all the gains of the spiritual life is at Allah (S.w.T.)'s !Wish

Observe the Act of Drinking Water

Someone gives you a tumbler of water. Where this water has come from? Whose property is it? Who has made it? Who has fetched it? Who has given him the strength ?to fetch the water? Who has given him the initiative to quench your thirst

Therefore, if one thinks about a glass of water, he will know that the ultimate provider !(.is none else than Allah (S.w.T

(.The Dress Too is Provided By Allah (S.w.T

Does the dress that we wear, from its rudimentary state to that when it is ready for use, has any initiator other than Allah (S.w.T.)? Just imagine who has created the cotton? Who made the hands that contribute during the stages of its conversion to fabric? Who gave wisdom to the weavers to develop skills at their trade? When we :seriously think, we realize that

أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الأمُورُ

now surely to Allah do all affairs eventually…

(come! (Sura Shura, ۴۲:۵۳

?It Is Allah (S.w.T.) Who Wards Off Troubles

It is not possible for anyone, other than Allah (S.w.T.), to keep a person out of harms way. Imagine, who gives cure to a person suffering from an ailment? Do the medicaments and the physician give him the cure? Or the real cause of the cure is somewhere else to find? Who gave the knowledge to the physician? Who controls his faculties of diagnosis? In fact, the real diagnosis comes from Allah (S.w.T.) and the .physician is only an instrument for this

?Physician or Killer

In Shiraz, during an epidemic of measles, a physician's young son was afflicted with the disease. Since he was under the treatment of his own father, a successful practitioner, there was no possible flaw in the treatment. But the diagnosis went wrong and the medicines administered to the lad too were not effective. The result .was that he died

None can come in the way of Allah (S.w.T.)'s will. The knowledge acquired by a physician is effective only when Allah (S.w.T.) wishes the patient to recover. The .medicine is effective only when Allah (S.w.T.) wishes it to be so

As long as one doesn't understand these things, it is not possible for a man to comprehend the reality of the ultimate control of things. If you connect the ways and means to self and forget the Cause of the Causes (Allah (S.w.T.)) then you are ignorant of la ilaaha ilallaah because the ultimate control over everything is His. Whatever is .there, and whatever happens, is through Him

In All Matters Allah (S.w.T.)'s Will Prevails

,Therefore

p: ۱۳۳

whatever benefits you derive from anyone, or the harm that comes to you, are all with the Will of Allah (S.w.T.). If someone clears his debt with you, it is Allah (S.w.T.) who has motivated him to keep his promise. Who has taken out love for wealth from people's mind? It is Allah (S.w.T.). Allah (S.w.T.) has termed wealth as Maal. It is called Maal because the hearts are attracted (maa-el) towards it! "When the importance of Maal is in the heart, only Allah's intervention compels him to clear your debt!"

Intercession Too is Necessary

The strength and reservoir of your heart is only Allah (S.w.T.) and your total trust should only be on Him. We shall talk about it later on. For the present we are discussing about knowledge. It is necessary to get a better understanding about it from the Qur'an and the Traditions. No power other than Allah (S.w.T.) has the capability to profit or harm anyone if Allah (S.w.T.) Wishes otherwise.

Tawakkul Comes With Knowledge

If the knowledge is correct, Tawakkul results. Allah (S.w.T.) has the same relation with men as of an attorney with his client.

If a person has to seek justice, he will be grossly incompetent to deal with the matter on his own. He feels the need of such an attorney who is well versed with the law and has expertise of handling such cases. For this purpose the person makes inquiries with friends to suggest names of the most suitable lawyers. He will then find out about the track record of the

lawyer. It is quite possible that a lawyer might be having all the necessary qualifications but lacks the intelligence and tact to handle his case. Another important aspect to be considered while commissioning a lawyer is to know that he has sympathy for his clients that he gets the verdict in their favor and doesn't become the cause of headaches in the future. If the lawyer is not kind and is a person who can sell his conscience, then it is quite possible that he extracts more fees from the client and .might even turn the tables against him

If one gets an attorney fitting all these requirements, it is fine and the client is now certain that his matter is in safe hands. The same is the matter of the Haal (rapture) .and exhilaration for Tawakkul

N'im al-Wakil

Is there anyone more befitting of the above-mentioned conditions than Allah (S.w.T.)? Besides Allah (S.w.T.), can anyone have a total comprehension of our expedience and problems confronting us and fully competent to tackle them that both our worldly .lives and the Hereafter are taken care of

Do we consider anyone, other than Allah (S.w.T.), empowered to derive benefit for or ward off harm from us. We know that the claim of 'ala kulli shayyin Qadeer (having !(.Power over all things) cannot be made by anyone other than Allah (S.w.T

?Is anyone kinder than Allah (S.w.T.) on His creatures

No doubt Allah (S.w.T.) is the reservoir of all kindness. He is the fountainhead of love and affection. The

love and affection of the parents or that of anyone else is like a drop when compared .to the love that Allah (S.w.T.) has for his creatures

Therefore it is quite natural that when I turn to Him for help in my matters, trust Him totally, and accept Him as the Most Excellent to Trust (N'im al-Wakil) then happiness will be generated in my heart. When I seek and depend only on Allah (S.w.T.)'s help to ward off some anticipated difficulty, then my worry will be removed because I know .that my Omnipotent N'im al-Wakil is on my side! No power can cause harm to me

Therefore: all troubles, fears and hopes are because of a person not having Tawakkul on Allah (S.w.T.). When there is no feeling of Tawakkul in a person, then what is the use of saying, "alayhi tawakkaltu wa ilayhi muneeb" (on Him I place my trust and to (!Him I turn

(.A Mutawakkil Doesn't Fear Other than Allah (S.w.T

The people of Tawhid (monotheists) are those who, when they are threatened by saying that their enemies have united against them, their Faith in Allah (S.w.T.) !enhances and they say, "Allah (S.w.T.) is our best support. He is the best of attorneys

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُواْ لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَاناً وَقَالُواْ حَسْبُنَا اللّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

Those to whom the people said: Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them, but this increased their faith, and they said: Allah is sufficient for us and (most excellent is the Protector. (Sura Aal Imran, ۳:۱۷۳

In fact

these are the people who have truly accepted Allah (S.w.T.) as their wakil. They are not like us that we either uttered the words or read them in the Qur'an. Qur'an is not just to read but the purpose of its revelation is to read it correctly, to understand its contents and acting on them. If the ecstasy of Tawakkul and its understanding do not arise in the person then any amount o reading the Book will be futile. Is it not a pity that we read the Holy Qur'an our entire lives but don't understand the three conditions prescribed by Allah (S.w.T.) for us. With our oral expressions we have accepted Him as N'im al-Wakil but in practice we have not deemed Him our wakil from the heart. If we had done it from the heart, we would not have the need to look !around for smaller wakils

Who Expects Help From Other Than Allah (S.w.T.) will Fail

In Umdat ad-Dayee and Usul al-Kafi it is recorded that Muhammad Bin Ajlan once was highly in debts. He thought of going to the administrator of Medina, Hasan Bin Zaid, to seek his help. On the way Hadrat Muhammad Bin Abdullah Bin Zayn al-'Abidin (a.s.) met him. He asked Ibn Ajlan about his problem. He replied he was on the way to the emir to find a way out of his debts. The reply was, "I have heard a long Hadith al-.(.Qudsi from my cousin Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s

In that there is a sentence about your problem: "By my Dignity and

Majesty! I nullify the hopes of those persons who depend on the support of anyone ”!other than Me

Did you insist on Allah (S.w.T.) to give you eyes to see, give you ears to hear? When“ these things were necessary for your creation, Allah (S.w.T.) has given to you without “ ?asking for them. Will he not give you help if you ask for it now

Muhammad Ajlan said, “Narrate the Hadith once again!” He repeated it. Muhammad !Ajlan wanted to hear it a third time, and so was it repeated

Muhammad Ajlan was now convinced. He said, “I have understood! I entrust my ”!(.affairs to Allah (S.w.T

At the end of the narration it is recorded that within a short span of time all the .worries of Muhammad Bin Ajlan had vanished

The Circumstances Have Made us Deaf and Dumb

We have not reached the stage of Tawhid (monotheism) where one totally trusts .(.Allah (S.w.T

It is said in Du’a Kumail, “O One who is my only support!” But do we really, in full senses, say the truth when we recite it? Do we really and truly consider Allah (S.w.T.) as our only support! The fact is that the circumstances and worldly matters do not allow us to directly communicate with Allah (S.w.T.) that we understand the real purport of La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah. You must have heard that saying these words is like having the key to Heaven in one’s hands. The one who repeats these words will earn great Rewards in the Hereafter. Does one really

?get the reward and the key to Heaven by mere repetition of these words

No. It is not like that. But, if a person does it with total dedication of heart then the doors to the Heaven would certainly open for him. But the words coming from the .heart's tongue takes a lot of effort

Generally a person thinks that he himself and the circumstances are the reasons for power and authority (Hawl and Quwwah). With the tongue he says. 'La haula wa la quwwata illa billah' (There is no power and authority except with Allah) but in reality he means, 'la haula wa la quwwata illa bi wa bila asbab' (There is power and authority (!except with cause and effect

If the aim is to achieve the state of Tawakkul then we shall do such acts that our hearts should get the feelings that we can follow the faith in its true spirit. Remember! The correct use of time at our disposal and the true purpose of our lives are to be .conversant with the laws of the faith

Tawakkul Has Stages

We have said that Tawakkul requires that one establish with Allah (S.w.T.) the relationship of the client with his attorney. This is the first stage of Tawakkul. To .achieve the higher stages, keen efforts are required

If you wish to study the natural Tawakkul, you must observe the dependence of a child on its mother. It rivets its attention on the mother for all the needs. It cries for its mother when hungry

or it trips and falls down on the ground. When a child comes to a situation of getting beaten by his companions, he cries for the help of his mother. This is the natural stage .of Tawakkul

If we acquire Tawakkul of this intensity for Allah (S.w.T.), then we would have achieved a moderate level of Trust on Allah (S.w.T.)! The third type of Tawakkul is when a dead body is in the hands of the person who gives him the final bath. This is not the place to dwell in detail about this. The reference is only to remind us that if some of us achieve the capability of Tawakkul, then the instinct of pride will not touch our heart because of this achievement. We must remember that there are many .stages of Tawakkul still to acquire

Tawakkul Must Be Perpetual

Another important point is that the Tawakkul must be perpetual. It is not that sometimes one swears by Tawakkul and at others he acts otherwise. The true state of Tawakkul is that one trusts Allah (S.w.T.) at every step in his life. He should not depend on anyone other than Allah (S.w.T.) for his matters. This is possible with .perpetual supplication, prayer and effort

You have seen that the child looks at the mother with gratefulness. He doesn't look at anyone else to ward away harm to him. Even if someone else helps him, he will be thankful only to the mother. Can we, at least, be as much grateful to our true ,Benefactor

!Allah (S.w.T.), to the extent that a child is to his mother

The Nineteenth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord. ((Sura An-Nahl, ١۶:٩٩

(.Sorrows and Happiness Are From Allah (S.w.T

Tawakkul requires that people should understand that on everything is Allah (S.w.T.)'s suzerainty and all things big and small are His. All that happens is with His wish and :command. As it is said in the Sura an-Najm giving examples of certain things it is said

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى

And that He it is Who makes (men) laugh and makes (them) weep; (Sura an-Najm, (۵٣:۴٣

This means that it is Allah (S.w.T.) who controls the causes for men becoming happy and sad. He provides wealth and riches to people and makes them prosperous. The land on which we walk also belongs to Allah (S.w.T.). The dwellings in which we live in, and all the paraphernalia therein belong to Him only. We should have absolute Faith in .His Sovereignty over everything

Without Knowledge Faith of Tawhid is Not Practical

As long as one doesn't have faith in the facts mentioned, it is not possible to understand the reality of La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah. Man has to understand that the authority of anyone, other than Allah (S.w.T.), on anything is totally negated.

The word “La” asserts that there is no power in the hands of anyone other than Allah (S.w.T.). He alone is the reservoir and fountainhead

.of power and is the Creator and the Possessor

There is no permanent class or status for the creatures. The ability of man to use the .(.tongue and modulate words is because of the Will of Allah (S.w.T

The Mouth Opened But Didn't Close

Sometime ago, a woman was brought to a hospital. Her lower jaw was hanging downward. They said that she opened her mouth wide to yawn. Ever since then she .was unable to close her mouth

It is true that making both the jaws meet is in His Power! The summary of this discussion is that in matters man doesn't have total control and in everything the wish of Allah (S.w.T.) is Supreme. The matters that are unseen will become visible only with Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish. To understand this phenomenon, it will need deep thinking and .wisdom

The Importance of Sura Al-Tawhid

About a third of the contents of the Holy Qur'an is about Tawhid or the Unity of Allah (S.w.T.). This highlights the importance of the verse of Tawhid that is specifically pertaining to the fact of the Unity of Allah (S.w.T.). According to some authentic .traditions, the felicity of reciting this Sura is equal to reciting a third of the Qur'an

Who deserves this felicity? The person deserving this reward is one who practices Taqwa or absolute piety. He can recite this verse thrice and get felicity equal to the .recitation of the complete Book

As we have said earlier, saying la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah is like having the key .to the Heaven in one's hands

But this privilege too is only for those who are practitioners of true Taqwa and have a complete understanding of and absolute faith on Tawhid. How could an ignorant ?person with aimless recitation of La hawla deserve to get the key to the Heaven

(.Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) is a Source of Pride for Those Who Trust on Allah (S.w.T

The first stage of Tawakkul is that people should not think of Allah (S.w.T.) like a worldly attorney to whom they trust their matters with full confidence. The second stage is that the person trusts on Allah (S.w.T.) at least as much as a child puts his trust on the mother. The third stage concerns the privileged persons whose wealth and possession is only on the Will of Allah (S.w.T.). They do only that which has the !(.express approval of Allah (S.w.T

Hadrat Ibrahim Khaleelullah (a.s.) had achieved the highest degree of Tawakkul. When the men of Nimrod wanted to consign him to the fire, Hadrat Jibril came and asked him, "If you have any requirement, please tell me!" Hadrat Ibrahim said, "I do have a requirement, but I will not ask it of you!" Jibril asked, "From whom, then?" Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) replied, "He is aware of all my needs! I need not ask him. He is all-wise and He sees everything! Whatever He wishes for me, I too wish for the "!same

Have We Ever Told The Truth

We must be uttering a thousand times the word Hasbunallah wa n'im al-Wakil (Allah suffices for us and He is best attorney!). But in reality have we ever trusted to Him, wholly or partially, our

?worldly matters or affairs of the Hereafter

Have we ever acted upon the injunction of the Holy Qur'an -Fattakhi dhuhu wakila – (then take Him (Allah) as an attorney)? If the reply to this question is in the negative, then what is the need of complaining and living in doubts and fears? Believe me! .There is only one reason for all the trouble. That is, paucity of faith and belief

A Mutawakkil is Never Greedy

If someone acquires Tawakkul in day-to-day life, then he will be free of greed and .avarice in his needs and wants

During Hijjat al-Wida, The Last Hajj, the Prophet (S) held the threshold of Ka'aba and turning towards his companions said, "Ruh al-Amin, Jibril, has revealed to my heart that no person will die till the sustenance earmarked for him in this world is not exhausted. This means that the person will not die before consuming the last morsel of food meant for him. Therefore, fear Allah (S.w.T.) and avoid greed and avarice, lest you involve yourselves in illegitimate (Haram). The one who reclines on the worldly "!matters, he will never be sated with however much he gets

This doesn't mean that one should not strive for search of livelihood. Do strive, but .always with Tawakkul in mind

Dependence on The Wakil is Necessary

Consider this example with care and attention. Suppose you are involved in some legal problem. Dealing with this problem personally is beyond you. We suggested to you to look for a wise and competent lawyer and act on his advice. Then this act of

yours will not be contrary to the requirements of Tawakkul but also the attorney's advice will be binding on you because he wants things that way and your action also in .accord, because he wishes to set your matters right

This example proves that following the attorney's advice implicitly is in accordance with the requirement of Tawakkul. Similarly Allah (S.w.T.) reforms the affairs of people .through the circumstances (asbaab) created by Him

Cure from ailments is at Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish, but He also wants people to go to a physician and get medicines prescribed. He has exhorted people not to neglect this important matter in their lives. Similarly about the affairs of the Hereafter Allah (S.w.T.) says that for qualifying for the Heaven, a person's own actions will be the .yardstick for judgment

وَأَن لَّيسَ لِلْإِنسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى

(And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for. (Sura an-Najm, ۵۳:۳۹

You should not depend only on your prayers for deliverance, but also on His Munificence and Kindness. Don't brood too much on your good deeds that it gives rise to the instinct of pride that might go against you. The best course for you is to .(.implicitly follow the Commands of Allah (S.w.T

A Shop Without Goods on Allah (S.w.T.)'s Support

This is the reason that when the toilers stir out of their homes in search of work, they say, "O Sustainer! We strive for earning the day's square meals. You must give .abundance!" These words reflect the spirit of Tawhid

It is said that in Medina a person

came to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) and complained of penury. The Imam said that when he reached home in Kufa, he should take a shop on rent and sit there. The man said, "I have no money to invest on goods!" The Imam replied, "Do whatever you are asked to do!" The man complied, rented a shop and started sitting there every day. After a few days a person came to him with some goods and asked him to sell them on the basis of a pre determined commission. The owner of the goods said that he !was leaving the goods in the shop on consignment basis of sell-and-pay

Another person came with some more goods and there was a flow of suppliers of goods to the shop. Buyers too started flocking the shop. The affairs of the person took !a turn towards prosperity

(.An Idle Youth is an Enemy Of Allah (S.w.T

There are some people who, on hearing that one must put Trust on Allah (S.w.T.), wrongly think that they need not make any efforts because Allah (S.w.T.) will provide their sustenance. They are absolutely wrong. They must work in obedience to Allah (S.w.T.)'s injunction for earning a fair living and not only in obedience to the .instructions given at the place of work

Whatever work a true Muslim does is only in Obedience to Allah (S.w.T.). He knows the Prophet (S.)'s exhortation, "An idle youth is Allah (S.w.T.)'s enemy" Therefore he goes .out in search of his livelihood

The Learned to Get Sustenance From Ghaib

Someone might raise an objection that why the people of

learning don't stir out in search of livelihood? The truth is that the nature of work of a seeker of knowledge (Talib e Ilm) is different from that of other people. It may not be possible that a person wants to train himself in jurisprudence and does other trades for a livelihood. He has to spend all his time in seeking knowledge on the matters of the Faith. Allah (S.w.T.) arranges their sustenance from – min haythu la yahtasib – a place he never imagined! Therefore, it has been narrated that excepting the seeker of knowledge, Allah (S.w.T.) has provided livelihood for all the creatures from the .material resources of the world

Tawakkul Depends on the Circumstances

One very important sign of Tawakkul is not the presence of any element of avarice in the person. The second sign is that when he meets different people, there is no change in his attitude. In certain cases persons think that they are men of Tawakkul, and imagine that they are totally dedicated to Allah (S.w.T.), but when they meets with failure in certain worldly affairs, they get dejected. This is a sign that they were depending more on worldly concerns than on Allah (S.w.T.). If there is total dependence on Allah (S.w.T.), then one would know that whatever happened to them !is with His express Wish and thank Allah (S.w.T.) under all circumstances

Weakness of Faith

Blaming or praising the circumstances is both the signs of lack of Tawakkul in a ,person and a proof of the weakness of his Faith

because, if the Faith on Unity of Allah (S.w.T.) (Tawhid) is firm, then Tawakkul will definitely be there. Tawakkul is always reflected in the words and deeds, likes and dislikes, of a person.

If someone enjoys a gain for some reason and, instead of being grateful to Allah (S.w.T.) for His Blessing, is only thankful to the favorable circumstances for his success, then he is a Mushrik or polytheist. Also, because of the circumstances, if he fails in his efforts, and blames the circumstances for his misfortune, then he considers only the circumstances as his Mushkil Kusha or his trouble-shooter and not the Will of Allah (S.w.T.). This is a general failing of the human beings.

But one who puts his total trust on Allah (S.w.T.), he doesn't depend on the circumstances for the success of his tasks. If he fails in his efforts after due trials, he resigns himself to the fact that Allah (S.w.T.) willed it that way. Although the unfavorable circumstances might have been the cause of his failure, he thanks Allah (S.w.T.) that he believes the circumstances to be under the Power of the Almighty.

Acquiring Tawakkul is Mandatory

Tawakkul is mandatory on the Muslims. Neglecting it will be tantamount to not abiding by the mandatory action. As implicit faith on Tawhid is compulsory, Tawakkul too is necessary for a Muslim. It is a fact that when a person is firm in his belief of the Unity of Allah (S.w.T.), he instinctly becomes a practitioner of Tawakkul. Such a person is endowed with

all the requirements of Faith. Iman bil Tawhid means that he trusts all his affairs to the Wish of Allah (S.w.T.). He expects help only from Allah (S.w.T.), fears Him and puts .total Trust in Him

The researcher Ardabili says in "Zibdat al-Bayan" that the Command of Allah (S.w.T.) about Tawakkul is not specifically for the Prophet (S.) but it is in general for all human beings. The Holy Verse "Fattakhi dhuhu wakila" is for everyone and the witness for this is borne by the other verses of the Holy Qur'an wherein the populace is :addressed in this manner

وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُواْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

(and on Allah should you rely if you are believers. (Sura al-Maidah, ۵:۲۳...

.Therefore this is a general injunction for all Muslims

Here it is possible that one might say that such injunctions in the Qur'an are just a part of the code of moral values. Then the injunction of believing in La ilaaha illallah might face the same doubt. The meaning of La ilaaha illallah is that Rabb (Lord), Ma'bud (Creator), Mudabbir (Wise), Worthy of Worship and All Pervading is only Allah (S.w.T.) and none else. This is the Practical Tawhid (Tawhid al-Af'aali). Is it possible that even those who do not have faith in this might not be questioned for their lack of faith! No! .In all circumstances firm faith on Tawhid is compulsory

Tawakkul and Counsel

The researcher Ardabili says that in terms of the Holy Verse "Fatawakkal 'ala Allah" (therefore place your trust on Allah) it is still binding

on every believer (mu'min) to take advice from others in all matters. But he should also not think that the best solution for his problems is only in the advice he has obtained from others. In fact, he should depend on Allah (S.w.T.) that He puts the right .advice on the tongues of the advisers

If because of good advice you succeed in your task, then don't say that the desirable result is only because of the advice. You should think that Allah (S.w.T.) had guided your advisers aright! If you are unsuccessful in your efforts, despite all the good .advice, think that it was Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish

Therefore, whether you acted on your own intuition or the advice of others, hope for Allah (S.w.T.)'s Help in your matters. Always ask your advisers to give their right .suggestions mindful of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish in the matter

If There is no Tawakkul There is no Faith

Ardabili says that one who has not acquired Tawakkul has deprived himself of Faith. :Because Allah (S.w.T.) says

وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُواْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

(and on Allah should you rely if you are believers. (Sura al-Maidah, ۵:۲۳...

This proves that if there is no Tawakkul there is no Iman or Faith. This proves that the crux of the faith is to believe that Allah (S.w.T.) is the Causer of the Causes (Musabbib al-asbaab) and the basic requirement of the Faith is to Trust on Allah (S.w.T.). If you rate your own view or the advice of others more than the Will of Allah (S.w.T.) then you have

distanced yourself from Him. In these circumstances you have ceased to be a ?believer, then what is the question of your practicing Tawakkul

Tall Claims Belittle a Person

A person, sixty years of age, had claims of being an adept at everything, was particularly proud of his knowledge of medicine. He claimed that he was the Aristotle of the time. He proudly said that he maintained his body according to the rigid norms .of medicine and that he would certainly live with good health for the next forty years

One day the man made a meal of yogurt and cucumber around the time of Dhuhr. He was devoid of teeth that he had already lost. He developed a heart- ache after his meal. He thought that the pain was due to the cold. He made a self-diagnosis that he was chronic sufferer of biliousness, and the yogurt he had eaten was not sufficient to curb the bile. He therefore drank some lime- juice. He thought that this treatment !would give him comfort. But by Asr he was really put to rest! He had expired

Don't Trust Your Own Intuition

One who depends only on his intuition, he thinks that there is no power over him that .has Wisdom of all the matters. Such a person suffers from lack of Faith

You must ensure that whenever you decide to do anything, depend on your own wisdom, advice of friends and trust the matter to Allah (S.w.T.). Don't ever think that the reason for doing any task is permanent. We never know what is the Wish

.(.of Allah (S.w.T

Briefly, if there is no Tawakkul, there isn't Faith. The meaning of Tawakkul is depending on other. If a person is the practitioner of Tawakkul, he trusts his matters to Allah (S.w.T.). If he doesn't Trust Allah (S.w.T.) then he depends on others for the .solution to his problems

The Twentieth Talk

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord. ((Sura an-Nahl, ۱۶:۹۹

In the last talk we have discussed the observation of the Researcher Ardabili on the :subject of Tawakkul. The ۱۵۸th Verse of Sura Aal Imran says

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّهِ إِنَّ اللّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those... (who trust (Him). (Sura Aal Imran, ۳:۱۵۸

Consult with others about your work, when you make up your mind after that, then trust on Allah (S.w.T.) and go ahead with your task. About this Researcher Ardabili has said that whether the basis of the decision to go ahead with the task is of your thinking or the advice of others, Tawakkul on Allah (S.w.T.) is very important. Whatever the result, success or failure, don't think that it was because of the good or .(.bad advice you followed, but try to resign to the will of Allah (S.w.T

Whatever task you want to accomplish, whether for seeking some benefit or for warding

p: ١٥٢

away some trouble, have Tawakkul on Allah (S.w.T.) for that matter and don't depend only on your own decision and the advice of friends. Remember your friends too, like you, are fallible beings. "Whomsoever you call for help, besides Allah (S.w.T.), is a creature of Allah (S.w.T.) like you." Therefore it is necessary that the fountainhead of the strength of your heart should be none other than Allah (S.w.T.). It must be remembered the wisdom and vision of men is limited and may not have the .comprehension of all the connected facts

We don't suggest that you should not consult nor do we ask you to refrain from acting on the advice of your well-wishers. But you must keep all your hopes only on Allah (S.w.T.) and pray to Him that He puts the best alternative for your welfare on the lips of your advisers. Allah (S.w.T.) says, "One who does Istikhara (seeks good from Allah (S.w.T.)) will never be in trouble." The reason for this is that one will not be aware of what is in store for him. He seeks Allah (S.w.T.)'s guidance because He knows .everything about all the matters

Istikhara And Tawakkul

It has come in the narrations about Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (a.s.) that whenever he had any important task to perform, like buying a house, marriage or need for traveling, we .would repeat the following words ۲۰۰ times: asta-khirullahi birahmatihi fi 'aafiya

.And, then, according to his own thinking he would act

The Researcher Ardabili says that because of Tawakkul, it

is mandatory on Muslims that they leave all their affairs in the trust of Allah (S.w.T.) and resign themselves to His wish. For example, a farmer sows seeds in his fields trusting in Allah (S.w.T.) that he gets a good crop and returns for his hard toil. When you succeed in any task, count it as Allah (S.w.T.)'s wish and not only the result of your own efforts. If you get the feeling of pride for you success, it might be tantamount to .(be termed practitioner of polytheism (shirk

It should be your faith that you are only an instrument to do the task, but its results are not in your hands. Your duty is to knock at the door of Allah (S.w.T.) and make .efforts to create circumstances for the fulfillment of the task

Whatever work a man does, his faith should be that fulfillment and accomplishment of the job is at the discretion of Allah (S.w.T.). The erudite scholars of Islam have said and, Tabari too says in his commentary, Majma al-Bayan that one should submit to Allah (S.w.T.) his affairs in such a manner that the thought of his person gets obliterated in the process. Ija'al an-nafs kal maadoom - think of the self as being .absent

A farmer, after sowing the seeds of oats in his fields, keeps all his hopes for a good crop on Allah (S.w.T.) and awaits His Wish. Innallaha huwar-Razzaq - the true .Sustainer is Allah

All men, in their affairs, must have such

.(.faith in Allah (S.w.T

(.Everything Happens With The Wish of Allah (S.w.T

As a farmer is aware that his crop is not only the result of his personal endeavors because lots of crops fail because of several reasons and also are destroyed by natural calamities as well. Similarly a trader should know that the profit in his business is not only because of his skills in the trade. As a matter of fact the labor of the farmer and the skillful investment of the trader are because of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Support and Wish. Allah (S.w.T.) is, no doubt, the creator and the Master of everything in the Universe. If His Wish was not favorable to them, all the efforts of the farmer and the trader could have gone to waste. Therefore, man should put his implicit Trust in Allah .(S.w.T.), otherwise he will not get anything other than failure and disappointment

Tawakkul in Times of Danger

It is He who gives relief from harm and danger. To face the enemy it is necessary to manufacture arms and strengthen oneself. But success in defense too is only at His pleasure. Therefore, to protect one's life, property, honor and specially the Faith, your .(.total dependence must be on Allah (S.w.T

Tawakkul doesn't mean that one need not make efforts to strife for material benefits, or to strive to ward off dangers and leave everything to the care of Allah (S.w.T.). We have reiterated on the matter several times that when the attorney tells his client to gather all the relevant documentation and evidence himself, he has to do

it. When the attorney has all the data on the causes of the litigation, he can successfully handle the case. The client cannot sleep away. He has to follow up the proceedings of the case. Similarly for defense against an enemy, one has to acquire and procure the necessary arms. Don't also think that making available the arms relieves you of action. Defense has to be done by you yourself. But the reservoir and the fountainhead of the strength of your heart is the support of Allah (S.w.T.) whose .pleasure is essential for victory and success

Ignorant Tawakkul

Many years ago in Samara there was literally an invasion by hordes of scorpions. They started emerging from every hole and crevice, every door and window. All the students fled from the schools. One student did an Istikhara whether he could stay put in the school. Somehow, the Istikhara came out favorable for staying. Therefore the student stayed on at the Madrasah. He slept there in the night. In the morning his .cortege had be taken out from the premises

This is an ignorant act that in the name of Tawakkul, expose oneself to danger. The right thing would have been to flee from the place of danger in Tawakkul of Allah .(.(S.w.T

As Tawakkul is necessary, so is the effort to earn a livelihood is necessary. Similarly putting ones conscience in danger too is Haram. Allah (S.w.T.) issues His Orders through the circumstances. Sometimes He does it without any recourse to circumstances to

!prove His Omnipotence

Imam Ja’far as–Sadiq (a.s.) and the Tiger

Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq (a.s.) was proceeding with a group from Kufa for performing the Hajj. On the way a tiger confronted them. The people in the group didn’t have the courage to face it. The Imam (a.s.) himself went forward and waved to the tiger to go away. It turned and went away. Then the Imam (a.s.) addressed the surprised group: “If you too were free of sins, you could have done what I was able to do! Even the wild ”.animal would have obeyed you

The researcher Ardabili says that at such times the Imam, through inspiration (Ilham) knows that Allah (S.w.T.) will give relief in such situations without any reason. He also knows that such acts are exceptional. Therefore, they cannot be applied everywhere .as a rule

Other Meanings Of Tawakkul

We have already mentioned that Tawakkul is the pursuance of legitimate affairs and dependence on Allah (S.w.T.). A question might arise in the minds that in some books Tawakkul has been mentioned in other senses than trust on Allah (S.w.T.). An example is that” a Mu’min doesn’t fear Allah (S.w.T.)”. Does Tawakkul al-Wajib or mandatory Tawakkul require one not to fear a wolf or a formidable enemy? Does it also require ?the person not to fear penury and disease

In another place it is said that a man of Tawakkul must know that the Master of all gain or loss is none other than Allah (S.w.T.). In another place it is said that one should not expect anything from anyone but

.Allah (S.w.T.). The true sense of Tawakkul is not derived from these statements

The Existence of Cause is Not Permanent

The researcher Ardabili says that explanation for such narrations is necessary. Not seeking anything from anyone would only mean that the person from whom one obtains anything is not the Ultimate Provider. If one needs bread, he should not think that the baker is the sustainer (raziq). The way one pleads for things with Allah (S.w.T.), one should not do the same way with anyone else. Otherwise it would be .Shirk or polytheism

These days there is a story taking rounds in Tehran that some people are propagating the Wahabi Sect in Tehran. They say that saying "Ya Muhammad" and "Ya 'Ali" is Shirk. In support of their claim they quote the verse: "Lo! those on whom ye call beside Allah are slaves like unto you." (Sura al-A'raaf, ۷:۱۹۴). They also quote: "Therefore call not (upon any one with Allah." (Sura al-Jinn, ۷۲:۱۸

.(These are ignorant persons who do not seem to know the meaning of prayer (Du'a

(.Calling Someone Other Than Allah (S.w.T

The meaning of Du'a, or Supplication is calling or summoning someone. Just calling and summoning is not forbidden. But doing it in a manner that Allah (S.w.T.) is called is not desirable. The call that is specifically associated with Allah (S.w.T.) is Du'a. If anyone called in this manner, it will be Shirk. Cure from a disease has to be asked for from Allah (S.w.T.). If the same thing is asked of from a physician, it can be termed Shirk. From the physician

one can only ask for diagnosing the ailment and prescribing the medicines. The intercession (Tawassul) of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) falls under the same category. If someone pleads to Hadrat Abul Fadl al-Abbas as one would plead with Allah (S.w.T.), .then it would be Shirk

But none do like this. Everyone thinks that Hadrat Abbas is the intercessor on their .behalf

Therefore, the meaning of Tawakkul is that other than Allah (S.w.T.) none else should be termed as the provider. Consider everyone under Allah (S.w.T.)'s will and pleasure. One should depend only on Allah (S.w.T.). Don't the people who object to saying "Ya Muhammad", "Ya 'Ali" realize that everyday they call several persons other than Allah !(.(S.w.T

Twenty First Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord. ((Sura an-Nahl, ۱۶:۹۹

Tawakkul Necessary to Learn About Tawhid

The importance of Tawakkul is supported by the fact that it is an important concomitant of belief in Tawhid. The first Da'wah (initiation) of all the Prophets (a.s.) has always been Tawhid or unity of Allah (S.w.T.). The Holy Qur'an dwells mostly on the topic of Tawhid. The knowledge that one has to compulsorily acquire is the knowledge about Tawhid. Knowledge starts with the understanding of Allah (S.w.T.) .and its peak is submitting oneself to His Will

One who really aspires to be an Aalim (an erudite scholar), his first duty is to get a clear

p: ١٥٩

understanding about Tawhid. He must perfect himself in this aspect of learning. It is not sufficient to say that we are Muslim and we have faith in Tawhid. The touchstone of Tawhid is firm faith in la ilaaha illallah and true understanding of this Commandment. This has to be accompanied by absolute faith on Tawhid al-Af'aali that whatever happens is with the Wish of Allah (S.w.T.). One has also to believe that every bounty is a gift from Allah (S.w.T.). The faith has to be from the depths of the .heart and not just an utterance from the lips

Difference Between Words and Deeds

During a day we pray five times. During these prayers we utter the words Rabb al-'Aalameen at least ten times. But mere utterance of these words is not sufficient for the perfect belief on the Lord of the entire Universe. The belief has to be from the depth of the hearts that He is the Creator of all those false gods who made spurious claims to godhood. Mere words are not sufficient. They just purify a person as a part of the mandatory performance of prayer five times a day. The main purpose is the understanding of the real fact that One on whom every human being puts faith is the sustainer of all the worlds. He is the Creator of things from smallest particle to the elephant, the human race, earth, sky, the constellations and Jinns and angels. He controls the affairs of all His creatures. Although it is not possible

for the human eyes to see Allah (S.w.T.), a firm faith in the Qur'an gives one the belief .to attain true Islam

Entrusting the Affairs

?(.Isn't the Holy Qur'an a Book Revealed by Allah (S.w.T

If yes: then observe that from the beginning to the end it talks of Tawhid. Ma'bud (Deity), Rabb (Preserver), Malik (Master) and Mudabbir (Statesman) is Allah (S.w.T.). After knowing all this, when the Faith on His Divinity (Ilahiyat) is perfected then one .must trust all his affairs to Him

About Tawakkul the revered persons of the Faith have said that, "Tawakkul is entrusting all affairs, minor and major, to Allah (S.w.T.) who is the Absolute Master of the entire universe. If you consider yourself His creature, you should not say that you want things in a certain way. But whatever He does, whatever He Wishes and .whatsoever way He treats you, you must resign to His Wish

Attachment to circumstances doesn't come in the way of Tawakkul. We have said earlier that, Laysa lil insaan illa ma sa-aa, "There is nothing for man except for what he strives for" (Sura an-Najm, ۵۳:۳۹). But this doesn't mean that one should depend wholly on the circumstances. Your Wakil and Master Has said that He will give sustenance according to the circumstances, but the circumstances without Wish .cannot guarantee any results

Consideration of Verses Regarding Tawhid

We should give utmost importance to Tawhid over all other things. Think a lot over the verses in the Holy Qur'an about the subject of Tawhid. This will strengthen your Faith that circumstances have no

permanent form or status. At certain times the circumstances lose their importance and the benefits that could have accrued will no more be there. The circumstances or reasons becoming ineffective are a strong indication that there is some All Prevailing .Power that is Absolute, and is not subject to any circumstances or reasons

It is said about Plato (Aflatoon) that once he was afflicted with acute diarrhea. However much he was treated, he was not getting relief. His disciples said that although he was an adept at medicine, why he was not able cure his own ailment. Plato told them to fetch him a certain powder. He mixed that powder with water and took it. In no time his diarrhea stopped. Then he turned to his disciples and said, "I did take this powder earlier too. But as long as there is no Will of Allah (S.w.T.), nothing "!can happen

Sometimes we see that certain things happen unexpectedly. At times we very much want a certain thing, and the circumstances too are congenial, but that thing doesn't .come about

Some years ago, Sadr al-Hukama, who was a physician of very high repute, mentioned to me an anecdote. He said that once a patient was brought to him who was very weak and thin. When he, the hakim, tested the patient he found that he was in a very precarious condition with the kidneys, liver and heart very badly affected. He felt that the patient might live for a few days only and that

he had refused to treat him. The patient's relatives taunted the Hakim and said that perhaps he was imperfect in his calling that he expressed inability to treat him. The Hakim was upset with their misbehavior but kept quiet. In a lighter vein he told them to go home and give him Joshanda (a simple decoction of herbs used in homes for common colds).

After sometime, the same patient visited the Hakim. He was now in perfect health. His relatives, who were angry on him during their previous visit, were also there. They brought with them lot of cheese and shortening as gift for him. They said that when he had such a simple cure for the patient, why did he disturb them by saying that there was no hope for the patient.

This proves that Allah (S.w.T.) has Power over everything. All circumstances and reason have no effect when He wishes anything to happen. We find through our experiences that sometimes the most ineffective things have tremendous effect. At others, things that have proven effectiveness turn out to be ineffective. All this is definitely the result of Allah (S.w.T.)'s slightest gesture!

Allah (S.w.T.) told Hadrat Musa (a.s.), that he should seek even the salt for his use from Him. Allah (S.w.T.) told him that He is the provider of everything. This doesn't mean that one should keep sitting at a place and expect Allah (S.w.T.) to provide everything. It means keeping Tawakkul on him and keep searching for the salt for your

requirement! If Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish is not there, the entire land will be full of salt, but you may not get a grain of it for your use!

Fiqh and Tawhid

As long as one doesn't have absolute faith in Tawhid, a person cannot become a Faqih or Islamic Jurist. The person will not have the vision of the Faith. The skills acquired with hard work are a prelude to attaining enlightenment. For this one has to be a friend of learning and to be fully conversant with the dictates of the Shari'ah.

The populace will generally be involved in Shirk that they think that the circumstances cause the events. Wherever one looks, he will find people running after materialism. They worship circumstance and have extreme love for wealth and pomp.

There are some people who give an impression as if the Mihrab wa Minbar (the Niche in the mosque and the Pulpit) are their deity. They should know that it is shirk to consider the 'cause' as the 'causer'.

Piety (Taqwa) and Tawhid

It is our duty to reach the stage of learning where our faith in Tawhid becomes absolute. "Understand well that there is no deity but Allah (S.w.T.)". The way for reaching that stage is through Taqwa or piety. When your Taqwa is firm, then you will become erudite (Aalim) with Allah (S.w.T.)'s help.

He will bestow you with the wealth of knowledge. This knowledge will give you firm belief in "la ilaaha illallah" and "la hawla wa laa quwwata illa billah". Your faith will be firm and your

worldly life too will be better. When you transit from here to the Hereafter, then the light of knowledge, faith and belief will be your guide. The ranks of the Hereafter too will become visible to you in this light. There is no doubt that action is necessary with knowledge. If you desire to be ranked with the Muqarrabeen as-Saabiqeen (Trusted friends of yore), those who had a special status in the consideration of the Prophet (S.) and his Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), then you must attain perfect faith.

The True Faith

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) says that during one journey the Prophet (S) met some persons. They greeted him. The Prophet (S) asked them, “Who are you?” The persons replied, “We are Mu’minīn.” The Prophet (S) asked, “What is the proof of your Faith?. Is it just a mere claim that you are Mu’min or you have some strong proof for your claim?” They said, “We absolutely trust in the Wish of Allah (S.w.T.) and we have entrusted all our affairs to Him. We bow our heads in acceptance for whatever He decided for us!” The Prophet (S) rejoined, “You are wise and learned! You are near a stage when you will qualify to be in the company of the prophets (a.s.)”(١).

One who acquired Hikma (wisdom) he has acquired virtue in abundance (cf. Sura al-Baqara, ٢:٢٦٩). By acquiring learning you know the secrets of existence and will be in the know of what is not visible or evident. You have risen above materialism. The

---

١- From Usūl al-Kafi Haqiqat al-Imān wal Yaqeen

entire world is worshipping the apparent in this world, but you have risen far above that!.

Man should, therefore, perform such acts that he is able to acquire knowledge and faith through their performance and he reaches the stage of Tawakkul. He should entrust all his affairs to Allah (S.w.T.).

Abstain From Avarice

The Prophet (S.) then told them:

"If you are truthful, then don't construct the house in which you may not live. Don't hoard food that you may not eat! Fear Allah that you ultimately have to return towards Him. If you are truly a person of truth, Trust in Allah (Tasleem wa Rida) and men of Tawakkul then avoid avarice. One who is after acquisition of properties, and plans every time to have more of them and has concern that his holdings might diminish in their value, will be always scared of the coming times. If there is Tawakkul on Allah, there will be no concern for what comes and what goes!

You will then have no fear of penury or starvation! Avarice is a sign that all the claims of Tawakkul of the person are false. One who doesn't practice contentment and is always engrossed in avarice, it means that he has no Faith in the Musabbib al-asbaab (The Causer of Causes), who is Allah. He only considers the circumstances as the relievers of difficulties. If this is not the case, then he would not construct a house in which he might not live, he would not hoard food

grains that are much more than the real need of his family. One woman was saying that she had some money that she wanted to save for her shroud and interment after her death. She was asked, 'Are you saving the money with avarice in your mind. Otherwise, there is none who died and did not get a shroud and burial! As long as man remains the slave of circumstances, he will worship wealth! He should keep his death in view that before warming a place the drum for departure might be sounded!"

Destined Towards Allah (S.w.T.)

Allah (S.w.T.) says:

وَاتَّقُواْ اللّهَ الَّذِیَ إِلَیْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

(And fear Allah, to Whom ye shall be gathered back. (Sura al-Maidah, ۵:۹۶

When you have the belief that - Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'oon - we have to return towards Allah (S.w.T.), then how important it is for you to exercise maximum care to ensure that you don't commit any act of disrespect for Him, that you are destined to be presented before Him. Expecting favors from others than Allah (S.w.T.) is a sign of grave disrespect towards Him. How one would feel going to His presence that he had been committing these transgressions throughout his life!

Whenever Imam Hasan (a.s.) thought of death and the grave, he used to lament very much. Whenever he thought of the Day of Resurrection, he used to faint with grief. He was fully aware of the Greatness and Might of Allah (S.w.T.) and was conscious of the aura of the Day of Judgement.

Habib Ibn Madhahir was a Faqih

The Progeny of

Muhammad (a.s.) were the people of Knowledge and wisdom. Whosoever got a ray of knowledge in their company, became a practicing man of learning ('Aalim ba 'amal). The scholars should know that they must strive to get counted amongst those whom Aali Muhammad (a.s.) accept as scholars and not merely the populace praise them as .such

Imam Husayn (a.s.), during his journey towards Karbala, sent a letter through a courier to Hadrat Habib b. Madhahir to Kufa. The subject of the letter was: Ya ayyuhar rajul al-faqih - O man of erudition! The Imam (a.s.) wrote: Habib is truly a Faqih that he knows

Allah (S.w.T.) and also he recognize the Imam (a.s.). The foundation of his fountainhead is the understanding of Tawhid. The worldly knowledge and skills do not provide the instinct of Tawhid. Don't lose the way and do not get involved in absolute ignorance (Jahl al-Murakkab) that you are amongst the learned. This pride might .destroy you

The Twenty Second Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord. ((Sura an-Nahl, ١۶:٩٩

Tawakkul is the Concomitant of Faith

The Holy Verses of Qur'an are commensurate with the evidence of wisdom and intuition (Wajdaan), Tawakkul is an important condition and concomitant of Faith. :Therefore, it is very lucidly said in the Holy Qur'an

وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُواْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

(and on Allah should you rely if you are believers. (Sura al-Maidah, ۵:۲۳...

The

p: ۱۶۸

other point is that as people are exhorted to adopt Faith, so are they required to have Tawakkul. Having Faith on Allah (S.w.T.) doesn't only mean that a person knows that there is only one God (Allah (S.w.T.)) but also the faith that there is only one Creator of the Universe who is Almighty and Has unfathomable Powers. Aaminu billah - have Faith on Allah - is indicative of the fact that acknowledging Him as the Most High and totally put your Trust in Him. Don't consider that the circumstances are independent of His Wish and focus all your hopes on Him. Therefore one who doesn't subjugate his circumstances and hopes to Allah (S.w.T.), he doesn't have faith on Him. A person who doesn't think that the worldly wealth, the healer, medicaments and other mundane .matters are subservient to the Will of Allah (S.w.T.), he is committing infidelity

Reason Versus Will

Kufr means 'to hide'. This hides the light of the Haqīqa (the Reality), that is Allah (S.w.T.), from the person's view. When a person succeeds in a matter because of the externally visible circumstances, then his vision doesn't see the Musabbib al-asbaab, the Causer of Causes, that is Allah (S.w.T.). He thinks that the cure is only because of the investigation and prescription of the physician. He starts believing in the doctor but doesn't get the thought of One that created him and imparted him with the knowledge and the skill. The person who has Faith in Tawhid understands all these intricacies. Therefore

his Faith will never be shaky. Even if he has access to the worldly circumstances to .(.achieve his ends, his trust is always in Allah (S.w.T

Thus, one who is always the slave of circumstances and the apparent causes, is a Kafir. Here, by Kufr I mean the Real Kufr and not the apparent Kufr that can be removed by saying the two phrases of witness - La ilaaha illallah and Muhammadur Rasoolullah. Such a person, although a Muslim through his profession, is so weak in his faith that it cannot take him to the level of salvation. The reason is that the person hasn't yet understood that the worldly circumstances have no element of .(.permanence and they are absolutely under the Will and Wish of Allah (S.w.T

The Holy Qur'an mentions several such matters that are the cause of admonition. Just think of the River Nile parting from the middle With Allah (S.w.T.)'s wish and twelve dry passages appeared in the river, The bottom of the river became so dry that when people and their animals traversed the passages, dust came up there. Does this not demonstrate that the circumstance had lost its effect and everything therefore is .under the control of the Almighty

If Allah (S.w.T.) wishes, absolute thirst can be quenched without drinking water. But if His Wish is not there, then however much a person drinks water, his thirst will not be quenched. In certain ailments, a person is unable to gulp even a morsel of water. An

.example is the ailment of dropsy

Abdul Malik and the Ailment of Dropsy

It is written that Abdul Malik Marwan al-Umawi was afflicted with the ailment of dropsy. His expert physician advised him that for a day or two no water should go .down his throat. If he drank any water, it would prove fatal

But thirst dominated the unfortunate fellow. He insisted that, in spite the strict instruction to the contrary, he should be given some water to drink. He cried, "Give me some water, even if it takes my life out!" Despite knowing well, that intake of water !would kill him he drank some and died

Yes! The same water that is so essential for life, when consumed against the wish of .Allah (S.w.T.), instead of supporting life, becomes the cause of its extinction

It is written about Muawiya that, as said by the Prophet (S.), he was suffering from the disease of Jaw'u al-Baqr. The symptom of this disease is that the person becomes a .veritable glutton and is not sated, however much he eats

Ashab al-Fīl

In the Verse of Fīl (the Elephant) there is reference to some incredible happening. When Abraha, and his army of elephants, came to Mecca with the purpose of demolishing the Ka'aba, suddenly there appeared a swarm of swallows in the sky. Each of the bird carried three pebbles in its mouth and two each in every claw. The birds dropped these pebbles on the soldiers of Abraha's army who were riding on the elephants. The pebbles pierced through the bodies of the men and

their elephants. Thus the entire contingent of the elephants and the soldiers was routed. It was Allah (S.w.T.)'s wish that the invincible army of Abraha was subdued .with the pebbles

According to the history of the Jazeerat al-Arab, the birth of our Prophet (S) took place in the same year, which is popularly known as the Aaam al-Fīl. Imam 'Ali (a.s.) was born in the year ٣٠ Aaam al-Fīl. Till the Hijra (The Migration) calendar came into vogue, .the Aam al-Fīl was the calendar in use

You have also heard that the sharp knife did not do it's job on the throat of Hadrat Ismail (a.s.). Hadrat Ibrahim (a.s.) used the sharpened knife no less than seventy times on the tender throat of his son. But it could not inflict even a small cut on the throat. Because, what was wished by Allah (S.w.T.) was destined to happen! If Allah (S.w.T.) wishes otherwise, the entire hoard of the arsenal of the world will not cause .harm even to the minutest of creatures

We have therefore to understand that the most important aspect of the Faith is .Tawakkul

The Limit of Belief is Tawakkul

It is narrated that someone asked Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) about the limit of Faith. He replied, "Yaqeen or firm belief!" They asked the Imam (a.s.), "What is the limit "!(.of belief?" The Imam (a.s.) said, "Tawakkul on Allah (S.w.T

All this is the result of the knowledge of the relationship between the sabab (cause) and the Musabbib (Causer). If someone has a firm conviction that the effectiveness

of the causes depends on Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish, then the belief is termed Tawakkul. Such a person relies on the Musabbib (Causer) rather than on the sabab (the cause). His total dependence is on the wish of the All Pervading Allah (S.w.T.). He trusts all his affairs to Allah (S.w.T.). When he frees himself from the clutches of the 'causes' or circumstances, then the existence, or otherwise, of the causes is immaterial for him.

It is narrated that Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) has said, "The Faith of a person is not perfect till Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish prevails over his own thinking and intuition in his affairs."

When his Faith has reached a stage that he considers Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish must prevail over his own decisions, then even if he meets with an accident, his concern will not be for his material belongings, kith and kin, and he would resign to Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish. But if a person cares only for circumstances and causes, then only the physician and the medicaments would be his saviours. The Entity who gives the vision to the physician for the correct line of treatment will not be in the consideration of the person.

Is it not time that we abstain from depending solely on circumstances and causes in our matters.

The Hawk and the Prey

Sayyid Jazairi writes in Anwar al-Nu'mania that a ruler got a lesson in the following manner. One day he went hunting in the jungle. During the hunt the time for Dhuhr prayer came. His retainers prepared the lunch. They roasted

a chicken and served it on his table. Suddenly one hawk swooped from the sky and took away the chicken. The ruler got angry and ordered his men to hunt for the hawk and he too started on the same expedition. The hawk flew some distance, flew over a hill and went to the other side of it. The ruler's men too climbed the hill and went to the other side of it. They saw that a man, whose limbs were bound with ropes, was lying on the jungle floor and the hawk was feeding him small pieces of the roasted chicken. When the meat was finished, the hawk took some water in its beak and helped the .man to drink

The men came near the person and made inquiries about him. He said that he was a trader. He was on a business trip. At that place some thieves overpowered him. They took away all his merchandise and wanted to kill him. He appealed to them to spare his life. They expressed their fears that he might go to the city and report to the authorities against them. Somehow, they didn't kill him, but bound him firmly with ropes and abandoned him at the spot. The next day the hawk brought some bread for him and today it had fetched a chicken for him. It took care of the man twice a day. When the ruler heard the story, he had a sudden change of mind. He said that it

was a matter of shame for them that they were oblivious of Allah (S.w.T.) who took care of His creature even through a wild bird. He left his crown and the throne and joined the ranks of the men of piety. This proves that man can draw lessons from many places, but they are few who get reformed.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.), was making a commentary on Verse ١٠٢ of Sura Yusuf (Chp. ١٢), "And most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others (with Him)." someone asked the Imam (a.s.),"How is it that a person can believe (be a Mu'min) and associate partners with Allah (be a Mushrik) at the same time?". The Imam (a.s.) replied at some length, the summary of which is that in this verse, Shirk al-Khafi or minor-shirk is meant. An example of this Shirk is that a person says that if so-and-so were not there, he would have perished. Or he says that if so-and-so were not there, he would have been deprived of the family and children. The questioner asked, "What should the person say, then?" The Imam (a.s.) replied, "The person should say that if Allah (S.w.T.) had not sent a particular person in His Mercy, he would have died!"

Therefore, Tawakkul doesn't require one to totally ignore the circumstances and causes, but acceptance from the depths of the heart that the cause to be effective depends absolutely on the wish of Allah (S.w.T.). The Power and Authority is absolutely with Allah

.(S.w.T)

Shameful Act

Complete faith is necessary on this fact that one is not put to shame in the place of action. If this belief is there, then there will be no room for objection on the Divine Decree of Fate. (Qada wa Qadar). If, in fact, what the person desires doesn't happen, .then grumbling and complaining is a sign of the weakness of his Faith

Sometimes man thinks that he is firm in his faith, is a man of Tawakkul and trusts everything to Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish. But in a small matter his claim is proved wrong. He even mistrusts his own self. We sincerely pray to Allah (S.w.T.) that He preserves us against facing shame in this world and the Hereafter. We pray that Allah (S.w.T.) endows us with true Tawakkul that our total trust is focused on Him throughout our .lives

The Twenty Third Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord. ((Sura an-Nahl, ١۶:٩٩

Tawakkul in the Affairs of the Hereafter

Whenever there is mention of Tawakkul, the mind turns only to the trusting of the mundane affairs to the care of Allah (S.w.T.). But, as a matter of fact, the Tawakkul of a Mu'min encompasses both his worldly affairs and the Hereafter. He thinks that the life Hereafter is not transitory and therefore is more important. Therefore, all men must do Tawakkul on Allah (S.w.T.) during this life and trust his

.affairs to Him for the Hereafter as well

As one seeks Allah (S.w.T.)'s help for supporting his efforts for profits and warding off the possible losses, he should also believe that the circumstances and the reasons for any action are subject to Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish for fulfillment or failure of the task. Similarly in the spiritual matters too one should trust his affairs to Allah (S.w.T.)'s .Pleasure

Reasons For Moral Felicity

The reasons for the moral and spiritual felicity that are related to training of the conscience, acquisition of learning, belief and good deeds that bring a person closer to the heaven and higher status there, also need Tawakkul on Allah (S.w.T.) to be possible of achievement. For example, hoping to achieve the heaven is not possible if a person doesn't perform good deeds. But praying regularly, or fasting, or going for the Hajj or giving alms to the needy cannot be termed as acceptable to Allah (S.w.T.) if .the person thinks that He needs you to perform them

To the contrary, these acts might make the person proud of his virtues. Therefore all the hopes should be on Allah (S.w.T.) and the virtuous acts should be for His pleasure and not to seek His rewards. Remember, the good actions that are not acceptable to Allah (S.w.T.), howsoever good they are, are no guarantee for one going to the heaven. Similarly expecting to be spared from the hell after committing sins too is also futile. However, it depends on Allah (S.w.T.)'s wish if the sins are

to be pardoned by Him or not. Similarly a virtuous person going to the heaven or not is at the wish of Allah (S.w.T.). It is like the efficacy of a medicine. The patient only recovers from the ailment by the use of a medicament if Allah (S.w.T.) Wishes it to be !so

Depending Only on Actions is a Precursor of Destruction

If man depends entirely on his actions for salvation, then he is exposing himself to destruction. If there is anyone who can give salvation to him, it is only Allah (S.w.T.). It is true that the person has done good deeds but only Allah (S.w.T.) can make them effective. That is possible if Allah (S.w.T.)'s wish and pleasure is for acceptance of the .deeds

As we have already said that one should not be proud of his intelligence, his physical strength, the might of his pen or his skill at oratory. Similarly in spiritual matters, one should not depend only on his prayer and fasting. He should know that relief from the hellfire is not possible even if he is pious and abstemious. The actual salvation depends on the wish of Allah (S.w.T.). Similarly, for the acceptance of the good deeds .of a person to qualify for the heaven is at the will of Allah (S.w.T.) only

Sometimes a person has good deeds in his account equal to the size of a mountain. But in reality the weight of these good deeds is not even equal to the size of a sliver of grass. Therefore, acceptance of the deeds is

not dependent on their reasons, but in all circumstances it depends on the will of Allah .(.(S.w.T

Actions and Allah (S.w.T.)'s Blessings

The Prophet of Allah (S.w.T.), in his last Sermon, that has been recorded in the sixth volume of Bihar al-Anwār says at one point, "No one should make a false claim nor should he have unfounded hopes. Deliverance is dependent on good deeds and Allah ".(S.w.T.)'s Wish

Therefore man should not think that if he has performed some good deed in the Way of Allah (S.w.T.), he becomes automatically eligible for heaven; or, if his actions were contrary, his destiny will be hell. This is faulty thinking. He should in fact have trust on the creator in a similar manner that a farmer who does all the operations in his farm .and awaits Allah (S.w.T.)'s kindness for a good crop

A seeker of knowledge too should focus his hopes on the wish of Allah (S.w.T.) that He gives him understanding. Mere reading of books will not give him understanding of the intricate contents therein. The learning that needs intensive efforts also cannot be acquired by mere hard work. There are some persons who show keen interest and hard work to acquire learning, but they remain raw and green. We don't say that one should not work hard at his studies, but what we mean to say is that only depending on memory, understanding and hard work is not sufficient. For success, one must .have Tawakkul on Allah (S.w.T.) besides putting in hard and sincere efforts

Incredible Accident

Around

forty years ago, in this very place of learning, Musheer al-Mulk Shirazi too was living. A well-known teacher, whose name is not disclosed for some reason, used to teach Fiqh and Philosophy. He was very well known for his memory and his erudition. He slept well one night. But when he woke up in the morning, he had lost his complete memory. Even at the Fajr prayer he couldn't recite the Sura al-Fatiha. Anyway, the prayer was over. Later on when he opened the Holy Qur'an and tried to recite its verses, he couldn't do it. His memory was totally lost and he passed away in the same .state

Loss of Speech

O! Those people who are proud of their skills at oratory! The other day a person who came from Khorram Shehr has said that a person, whom incidentally I knew too, lost his power of speech since the last two months. With difficulty he is able to communicate with a lips like a small child. He is so worried with his condition that he abstains from communicating as far as possible. He went to Tehran to consult specialists about his condition. They have asked him to stay in the hospital for .treatment that, hopefully his speech might be revived

I am mentioning this because people should not be victims of complacency. They should remember Allah (S.w.T.) in all circumstances. Try to excel in any field of learning, but remember that they should rely only on Allah (S.w.T.) to give them understanding and the

.opportunity to utilize the knowledge acquired by them

The Light of Belief is Not Acquired

It is mentioned in the traditions, "Knowledge doesn't come with lot of reading and writing, but it is a light that Allah (S.w.T.) puts into the heart of a person whom He wishes to enlighten." The station of firm belief, the knowledge of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Names and His Attributes and the treasury of the spiritual knowledge comes to a person only with Allah (S.w.T.)'s wish. However much a person strives to acquire .these, he will not succeed if Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish is not there

Allah (S.w.T.) is Kind on His Creatures

All your activities should be such that you remember Allah (S.w.T.) all the way. You must have a firm belief that whatever you do will have effect and acceptance. What a beautiful phrase has been used in Du'a al-Iftitah, "He has endowed to us more than "!we asked for

You offer the congregational prayer in the hope of His blessings and with His Tawakkul in your hearts. You go for hajj also in the hope of His grace. But, by praying in congregation and performing the Hajj a few times, if you start thinking that the heaven is assured for you, then you might be under a misapprehension. Remember, what you have done is unlike the mundane work that the compensation is commensurate with the work that one puts in. Acceptance of your prayers depends .on the wish of Allah (S.w.T.) only

It is said that the value of a palm's length of the Heaven is equal to value of the

rest of the universe. Heaven is not a thing that can be bought with some prayer and ignorant pride. It is also debatable whether Heaven can definitely achieved by much prayer and supplication. The truth is that all you possess, and all you do is wished by Him. One might expect compensation for what really and truly belongs to himself! Everything belongs to Allah (S.w.T.), and any compensation that is given is only at His Wish! Man can only hope with Tawakkul on Allah (S.w.T.).

O Allah (S.w.T.)! By the rights of Muhammad (a.s.) and his Holy Progeny, give us the strength of courage and help us at every stage and make us truly the people of Tawakkul!

The Twenty Fourth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismillahir Rahman ir Rahim

قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى سَبِيلاً

Say: Every one acts according to his manner; but your Lord best knows who is best guided in the path. (Sura Banu Israel, ١٧:٨۴)

Action Sincerity of Purpose

If there is value for anything in the consideration of Allah (S.w.T.), it is the sincerity of purpose of His creatures. The Prophet (S) said: 'Actions are judged by their intentions' (Innamal 'amaalu bin-niyaat) If the purpose is to acquire the Wish of Allah (S.w.T.), and the actions too are in accord with His wish, and then it will make the person achieve great heights. But if the purpose is selfish, or not totally legitimate, although the person always utters, "Qurbatan ilalllah, and gives the impression of piety, there will be no use.

Such a person will rise empty handed from his grave and his Nama-e-Aamāl (The Record of Deeds) will be blank. But if there is sincerity of purpose in a man, then .everything falls in the proper place for him

The Verse that we have referred to in this context says: "Say (O our beloved messenger!): Every one acts according to his nature (shaakila); but your Lord best (knows who is best guided in the path." (Sura Banu Israel, ۱۷:۸۴

Now consider the meaning of the word Shaakila. If its meaning is nature or bent of mind, then the purport of the Holy Ayah will be that every person acts in accord with his nature and bent of mind. If the person is in the influence of Rahmani (Legitimate) bent of mind, his actions will naturally be virtuous. On the other hand if his nature is .(dominated by satanic thoughts, his actions then will be prohibited (Haram

When a person's nature is Rahmani, his actions too are with sincerity of purpose, even then if there remain some aberrations in his acts, he might be forgiven for those minor faults. But when a person has satanic nature, his efforts at doing good deeds .will be futile. It is therefore imperative to mend one's bent of mind

Now let us consider the ways of mending the Shaakila. How the Shaakila becomes ?Rahmani

On a Two-Way Lane

Every human being has naturally been placed on a two-way lane of virtue and vice. As an individual he is neither virtuous nor vicious. He

is like a clean and blank paper on which anything can be written or beautiful sketches can be drawn. Similarly ugly pictures or satanic things too can be written on it. Useful and informative essays can be written on it and misguiding things too can be scribbled on it. Man, ever since he arrives in this world, at the two-way lane leading to Rahmani or Satanic instincts. He has to choose between the worldly or the Ukhrawi, that is, a .way of life that can ensure for him a better Hereafter

Whichever way he inclines, his Shaakila too bends in that direction. Every thing that he does, whatever he sees or hears, and even the morsels that go down the person's throat contribute in the formation of his Shaakila. Every word that is modulated by the tongue too has its part to play in the person's Shaakila. The first impression that .anything has on a person will be on his psyche

If you use foul language against a person or you think ill of someone else, the first entity to take the ill effect of all this will be yourself. This will take you away from virtue and you will be giving place to evil in your Shaakila. Then, however much you pray and supplicate, your prayer will not be as virtuous as it needs to be. When your Shaakila is affected, then your intent will not be as solemn as required for sincerity in .prayer

A piece of bread, Halal or

Haram, pure or impure, when it goes down your throat, your Shaakila takes shape. If the bread is Haram, then every act performed by you will be satanic.

The Fury of Hell and the Echelons of Heaven

Human actions might have very minimal effect on the Shaakila of a person in his initial life. But by the time he comes of age, its formation becomes rapid. If during this period the tongue, eyes, stomach etc are freed from the bonds of guidance, and they indulge in prohibited (haram) habits, then the Shaakila will turn satanic. Such a person, when he departs from the world, will be in the group of Satans of the other world. His place then will be the last stage of the Hell that is called Asfal as-Safeleen.

But if the person, during his lifetime, tries to reform himself and keeps a watchful eye on every small act of his, tries to keep his tongue in check, opens his eye only in obedience to Allah (S.w.T.)'s dictates then he can achieve a very high status in Heaven where the angels would feel proud to serve him.

It is Only for Your Own Good

The exhortations that have come in the Islamic Shari'ah that Muslims keep away from carnal desires, respect the limits defined by it and don't go unbridled does not mean that Allah (S.w.T.) doesn't want them to lead a happy life. Or that He doesn't like the Muslims to enjoy their lives. The truth is never like that. But since your Shaakila is affected and you might be facing the danger of getting

pushed into the Asfal as-Safeleen, you are warned to save yourself from the effects of evil deeds. Every glance that you make on the television monitor and the cinema screen, will leave a negative mark on your psyche. Slowly, you will then come under the spell of Satan. If you don't mend your ways soon, it might be impossible to reform .the Shaakila after the age of forty years

Satan Feels Very Happy

It is said that Satan kisses the forehead of the forty year old person whose Shaakila is perverted. Satan says he would sacrifice himself on the person who has no chance of .reformation

We don't say that reform of such persons is impossible. But definitely it is very difficult. It is another matter if Allah (S.w.T.) is kind on the person and he suddenly starts !manifesting signs of reform and reverts to virtuous ways

Therefore, one should be kind on himself and guide others too to keep away from .lasciviousness

When the Shaakila is perverted, then matters reach such a pass that the person goes on pilgrimages, of Hajj and Ziyarat, not under Rahmani instinct, but under the influence of Satan. All these pilgrimages and the arrangements of meetings (Majalis) to mourn the Martyrs of Karbala will be just to show off to others. He might think that he was going for Hajj or Ziyarat just as a tour of pleasure or business! He doesn't do .anything with the true spirit

The Major Jihad

It is very strongly advised that one should do Jihad bin-Nafs (Struggle against one's own

desires). You must have heard the tradition of the Prophet (S.), narrated in the Usūl al-Kafi, that on his return from the battlefront he said, "We are through with the Jihad al-Asghar (the Minor Struggle) but the Jihad al-Akbar is still there." The companions asked what is that Jihad. The Prophet (S.) replied, "That is Jihad bin-Nafs."

Bearing the travails of this Jihad is tougher than going to fight on the battlefront. Therefore the rewards for Jihad bil Nafs are greater than for any virtuous act. This is the reason that the Prophet (S) has termed it as the Major Jihad. To keep oneself firm in the midst of carnal desires needs a much higher degree of valor than confronting the enemy in the battlefield.

Reform of the Shaakila is not possible without reining in the carnal desires. If you wish to conquer the strong fort of the heart to reach Allah (S.w.T.)'s firmament, then it is your duty to abstain from every forbidden thing (Haram) and the unbecoming (Makruh) things. You should also perform every obligatory (Fard) regularly and also the optional (Mustahab).

Shaakila and the Shari'ah

Reforming Shaakila is a very strenuous thing. But if one follows carefully the rules of Shari'ah, from the very beginning and the parents themselves give proper upbringing to the child in line with the Shari'ah, then the reform can be achieved in a smooth manner.

It is the duty of the parents that they don't give such nutrition to the children about which they are not certain that it is

legitimate (Halal). If a foster mother is arranged for a baby, they must make discreet inquiries that the woman is pious and of a good background. When the child grows, care has to be exercised that foul language is not used in his presence. No act should be perpetrated in the presence of the child that is morally undesirable.

Even if the parents have a difference of opinion, they should refrain from airing them even in the hearing distance of the child.

When the child attains the age of understanding, make him practice spending legitimately and frugally. He should be made to inculcate the habit of charity so that when he grows up, he doesn't turn into a parsimonious person. The child should be trained to dress modestly and decently.

Give pure and clean food to the child. It is not proper to think that the child cannot discriminate and hence can be given anything to eat. Allah (S.w.T.)'s curse will fall on the parents who encourage their children to drink liquors. How will such parents face Allah (S.w.T.)? Those who take their children to cinemas and other such centers of pleasure should know that the duty for formation of the child's Shaakila that has been entrusted by Allah (S.w.T.) on them is being neglected.

Every scene that is contrary to the norms of decency diminishes the sense of shame in the child. He becomes impertinent and might insult others. Such an unfortunate child, in later years, will find it very tough to banish

the negative traits that have taken root in his psyche because of the neglect of his .parents

When a child attains the age of eight years, he should be made regular at offering the mandatory prayers. When he is ten years, he should not share a bed with any of his siblings. Even after attaining the age of twelve, if he is not regular at prayers, he must be reprimanded. Corporal punishment is permissible in such a situation. This punishment should be discreet and within limits that it has positive and salutary effect .on the child

The orders of the Shari'ah have to be borne in mind from the time the mother conceives the child. The parents should abstain from taking forbidden food that it does not have any evil effect on the fetus. While mating, the parents should remember Allah (S.w.T.). In the beginning they should say Bismillah that Satan doesn't enter the seed at the time of conception. The thoughts of both the parents must be Rahmani at that time to ensure that the child develops a Rahmani Shaakila. If, at the time of conception, the father has satanic thoughts, then they will have negative effect on the child. It will then need lot of efforts to mould the child's Shaakila on .virtuous lines

(.Hadrat Fatima Zahra (s.a

Let us consider about the way Hadrat Fatima Zahra (s.a.) was conceived. It is narrated that when Allah (S.w.T.) decided to send the mother of the Imams (a.s.) to the world, then He, with His Omniscience, arranged

that her body should be so Rahmani that it should be as pure as the Godly Spirit (Ruh kulli Ilahi). The body should be as rare or light as the human spirit. Let it not be a .secret that the bodies of the Imams (a.s.) are as light as the spirits of the Mu'minīn

Since the body of the Prophet (S) is all Nur and rarity, and is absolutely Rahmani, his .shaakila is absolutely pure

It is narrated that the Prophet (S) was one day seated at Al-Tah. Imam 'Ali (a.s.) and Hadrat Ammar was present. Also present were Hadrat Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Jibril came at that time and conveyed Allah (S.w.T.)'s orders that the Prophet (S) should remain at that place for forty days and abstain from meeting his wife during the period. He was also asked to fast during the days and to spend the nights in prayer and supplication. He was asked to abstain during all the forty days from Mubah (permissible) acts like eating after sunrise and sleeping in the nights. The purpose was .to render the shaakila of the Prophet (S.) most latif or subtle

The Prophet (S) asked Hadrat Ammar to go to Hadrat Khadija and tell her that he wouldn't go home for forty days and that his not coming home was not because of .(.any differences with her, but was under the orders of Allah (S.w.T

Ammar gave the Prophet (S.)'s message to Hadrat Khadija. She sent back her greetings to the Prophet (S) and

said that she would patiently await his return after forty days. She spent these forty days in prayer to Allah (S.w.T.) at the house of her aunt, Hadrat Fatima bint Asad, the .(.mother of Imam 'Ali (a.s

On the fortieth evening Jibril came and asked the Prophet (S) to delay breaking the fast till the material for breaking the fast came from the Heaven. After the prayer Jibril, and along with him Mikaail and Israfil, (who generally don't come to the Prophets (S.) after the prayers), came with the fruits from the Heaven (oats, grapes .and dates) and water from the springs of the Heaven

Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) says that the Prophet (S) always asked him to keep the door of the house open at the mealtime so that anyone who came could partake of the food. But on that evening he particularly instructed not to allow anyone to come near him that none else had a right to partake of the food he was having then. After the Prophet (S) ate the food, Hadrat Jibril helped him wash his hands. The Prophet (S) now wanted to offer his optional prayers, but Jibril said, "Tonight you need not spend time in offering optional prayers. You must immediately go to Hadrat Khadija that the ".Heavenly Matter has been incorporated in your body

Hadrat Khadija says that she was about to sleep when there was a knock on the door. She asked who it was. The Prophet (S) said, "Open the door!" The Prophet

entered the house. As usual she brought water for his ablution. He offered two units of prayer of thanksgiving and went to bed. But that night he didn't do ablution before .coming to the bed

Thus from that pure body, the pure spiritual material was transferred to the purest .womb

The reality of this pure conception is wonderful. Hadrat Khadija (s.a.) said that she immediately felt that she had conceived. From the very next day, the pure foetus .(.starting with her mother and reciting the Praises of Allah (S.w.T

.(.These facts sound incredible, but are only based on the Will of Allah (S.w.T

It is among the Mustahabbat of our faith that on the Day of Judgement, Shafa'at al-(.Kubra (the Major Intercession) will be in the hands of Hadrat Fatima Zahra (s.a

The Twenty Fifth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

He said: 'Then by Thy Might I will surely make them live an evil life, all, Except Thy (servants from among them, the purified ones.' (Sura Sad, ٣٨:٨٢-٨٣

Actions Depends on the Niyyah or Intention

The basis of Faith is on the sincerity of the intention, otherwise all the actions are exercises in futility even if they are as huge as the mountains. If they are not performed with sincerity of purpose, their weight will be no more than a piece of ,straw. Prayer without sincerity too is not of any value because Allah (S.w.T.) says

فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّينَ

(so worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion (Sura az-Zumar, ۳۹:۲

The following

p: ۱۹۲

tradition of the Prophet (S), quoted from Usūl al-Kafi, is universally accepted by both :Shi'a and Sunni jurists

The Prophet (S) said: "actions depend on the intents" At another place the tradition is :quoted as

Innamal 'amaal bin-niyaat

Actions are judged by their intentions

Without sincere intent, any actions that are performed for show are of no use. Actions are effective, if intent is true. If any act is performed only for the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.), then it is acceptable; otherwise it is senseless and useless. Sometimes such .acts can be listed among the vices committed by a person for the Day of Reckoning

The Intent of Closeness During Prayer

You know it well that any prayer without intent (Niyyah) is meaningless. In every mandatory prayer the intent of nearness to Allah (S.w.T.) is essential. The intent is not just saying a few words, loudly or in your heart, that you are praying, or fasting, or performing the Hajj. When you go to the place of ablution to perform the ablution, the .intent of going there to perform the ablution is in itself the intent for that act

Now, who has motivated you to perform this act? In fact it is Allah (S.w.T.)'s Order to pray that has motivated you to do the ablution in preparation for the prayer. So, your Niyyah or intent to pray is in your action. You can repeat the wording of the Niyyah .when you actually stand up for offering the prayer

Now, who has motivated you to perform this act? The motivation is Allah (S.w.T.)'s Order

to you to offer the mandatory Prayers. Repeating of the words of the Niyyah may be done. But it is the obedience of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Order and your intent to pray is the motivation. But if the motivation is something other than Obedience to Allah (S.w.T.) and the desire to be close to Him, then however much you say Qurbatan il Allah, it will not have any relation whatsoever with the truth. It will, in fact, be telling lies that will destroy all your actions. Therefore it is imperative that the prayer should be with absolute purity of heart and secondly, only for Allah (S.w.T.)'s pleasure. In His court .only the truth is acceptable

One person says the Adhaan, but his intent is not prayer but to show off his skill of good recitation or to project himself as a man of piety. Then this act is bad in view of the Shari'ah. Such acts might even be counted among the sins of the persons who .perpetrate them

Rain Falls When the Prophet (S.) Prays

It is narrated in the Usūl al-Kafi that some companions of the Prophet (S) came to his presence and said that it didn't rain for a long period of time. They requested him to pray to Allah (S.w.T.) for rainfall. The Prophet (S) raised his hands for prayer and said, "O Allah ! Send rains!" The prayer didn't bring any positive result. The companions again came to the Prophet (S) and renewed their plea. The Prophet (S) again raised his ,hands skywards and prayed

O Sustainer! The world is suffering for want of rains! Don't make the sins of the“ people the cause for their deprivation of Your Blessing!” Even before the Prophet (S) brought his hands down dark clouds gathered and it rained so much that it was stagnation everywhere. The companions asked the Prophet (S) why it didn't rain when he prayed for the first time. The Prophet (as.) replied, “I did pray then, but with not the ”.fullest of intent

Allama Majlisi says in Sharh al-Kafi that when the Prophet (S) prayed for the first time, to keep the word of the companions, and in view of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish, he had perhaps said some supplicatory words. It used to usually happen that for keeping the companions happy he used to agree to their requests. Therefore the first prayer was not from the depth of the heart and was just to satisfy the companions. But the second time the Prophet (S) bore witness to the people's difficulties and made a recommendation for them, although they were guilty of sinning and not deserving of the bounty! But even then if Allah (S.w.T.) Wished, He must save them by sending the .rains. This prayer was from the depth of the heart and was duly answered

Insincerity and Hypocrisy

These days insincere flattery is very much in vogue that is limited to lip service. For example: You know that a particular person is your veritable foe, but when he speaks with you, he attempts to falsely prove that he

is your well wisher and friend. Don't you dislike his hypocrisy? Stealth and show is liked by none. The insincere show of friendship is not liked by anyone. Then how will Allah (S.w.T.) like this habit in persons? When you say “Allahu Akbar”, there must be sincerity in your statement. This statement has to be made with utmost sincerity that Allah (S.w.T.) is the Greatest and has control over everything in the universe. Without this sincerity how one can expect that the prayers will be accepted by Allah (S.w.T.)? The same words repeated without sincerity might even earn the ire of Allah (S.w.T.)!

Praise and Thankfulness for Bounties

Saying Alhamdu lillah is justified when it comes from the depths of the heart and with sincerity of intent for praising the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.). Whenever there comes any blessing from Him, one should say Alhamdu lillah. Sometimes the use of these words doesn't sound appropriate. Specially when they are used insincerely. When you accept that the Mun'im al-Haqiqi (the Real Benefactor) is Allah (S.w.T.), then what use flattering Zaid, ‘Umar, Khalid etc. When Allah (S.w.T.) is all Praiseworthy, then why sing the praises of others? This only goes to prove that your saying Alhamdu Lillah is insincere. Allah (S.w.T.) is fully aware of the thinking of your heart better than you!

Unfounded Claims

If your son professes obedience to you in his talks but in reality he is very stubborn and disobedient and you are aware that his behavior is hypocritical. Will you be happy with such a son whose

claims and actions are diametrically opposite? Orally he says that whatever he has is yours, but in the time of need he makes lame excuses. If you cannot be satisfied with such a son, then how can you expect Allah (S.w.T.) to be kind on us after all our .insincerity

Cheating Not Permissible

A wise person said that we dislike show and cheating in our mundane day-to-day affairs. For example: You have instructed the builder to construct the house of a certain design and should be strong and durable. But when he constructs and hands over to you, you find that instead of using properly tempered bricks, he had used weak and untempered bricks. Instead of steel he had used wood in the construction. But he has dressed the exterior very well with good paints. You will certainly tell him .that you are not impressed with the outward show

Or, for example: You have asked at home for the preparation of a sweet. When it was ready and you tasted it, you discovered that it was neither sweet nor good. However much the lady of the house praises the excellent color of the sweet, its good smell etc, .you will not approve of it

When you don't tolerate cheating in the worldly affairs, and don't accept things if they are not truly made to your specifications, then how can you expect that in the spiritual .matters Allah (S.w.T.) will condone your hypocrisy

The misfortune is that we are never ready to accept our failings. We like very

much to be heaped with false praises by our compatriots. The human psyche is so .lowly that it is happy with falsehoods and gets upset with the truths

Reforming the Hearts is Necessary

Wise is the person who understands that he is unwell and then looks around for treatment. If the person is ignorant of his ailment, the wrong treatment might kill him. We must know that in the Court of Allah (S.w.T.) nothing is acceptable unless it is accompanied with true intent. "Allah sees your hearts and not your faces." If in your heart there is the ailment of the love for the world, you must arrange to cure it and reform its likings and inclinations. Beware! the selfishness and praise of self might .spoil all your matters

If you are the owner of a sincere heart and right intent, then the slip of tongue might not harm you. This is true in the matters of Fiqh too. For example: While offering the Maghrib prayer, the intent was to offer the same, but through a slip of the tongue, you have done the Niyyah for the Isha Prayer. Here, there is no problem because your intent was to offer the Maghrib prayer only. The reason for this is that the standard .and the balance is your heart and your intent

The Battle of Jamal and Imam 'Ali's Companions

It is narrated that during the Battle of Jamal, a companion of Imam 'Ali (a.s.) took a deep sigh and said, "How I wish my brother too participated in this Jihad!" The person's brother was known as

a true friend of Imam ‘Ali (a.s.), for some reason he was unable to join in the expedition. Imam ‘Ali asked, “Is your brother desirous of taking part in the battle with sincerity of heart?” The companion replied in the affirmative. Then Imam ‘Ali said: “Don't worry! He is one of us in this expedition! Because of his true intent, he is as good as taking part in the battle.” Then Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) added, “There are lots of others, who will desire to participate with us in the battle of truth and falsehood. They haven't yet arrived in the world but are on the backs of their parents!” No doubt, this .participation is because of true intent and desire of the heart

May Allah (S.w.T.) Give us True Intent

We seek from Allah (S.w.T.) the truthfulness of intent. We follow our Imam az-Zaman :(a.j.) and say in our supplication

O Allah (S.w.T.)! Give us the will for Your Obedience and endow us with the blessing of“ .”keeping distance from sins and have the right intents

Sometimes it happens that man busies himself in the obedience of Allah (S.w.T.), but his activities are on the mundane activities. There is no doubt that he prays and supplicates, but his actions are not of true intent but are under the desires of his psyche. He thinks that he is doing things Qurbatan ilallah., but in fact Satan is .deceiving him

O Allah! Save us from the machinations of Iblis and also from the desires of the .psyche

The Twenty Sixth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the

Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِکَ لَأُغْوِیَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِینَ إِلَّا عِبَادَکَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِینَ

He said: 'Then by Thy Might I will surely make them live an evil life, all, Except Thy (servants from among them, the purified ones.' (Sura Sad, ۳۸:۸۲-۸۳

The Enemy of Faith Action

The topic of our discussion was sincerity of purpose (Ikhlas). We have said that Ikhlas is a formidable refuge to save oneself from sins. If someone wishes to save himself from the machinations of Satan, there is no other way for him than making access to Ikhlas. Without reaching this stage, the person will be in the hands of Satan as a ball is .in the hands of a child

It is Satan who destroys the faith and action of people. If sometimes, Satan is unable to destroy the faith of a person, he would certainly despoil it. He puts to waste the good deeds the person has done that could have been of help for him on the Day of Judgement. He is our veritable enemy, and therefore, we shall have to reciprocate equally fierce fully. Fattakhi dhuhu aduwwa (therefore take him (satan) for an enemy!). The enemy is very powerful and every moment he keeps trying to attack our hearts and our faiths. Therefore we should remain people of Ikhlas that we don't .become the abode of Satan's wickedness

Ikhlas is the Height of Tawhid

In the first Sermon of Nahj al-Balagha Amir al-Mu'minīn (a.s.) says, "The foundation of faith is the understanding (ma'rifat) of Allah (S.w.T.). The height of this understanding is acknowledgement of His

being the Absolute Creator (and complete faith on the Day of Judgement that has been the basis of the Da’wa (Invitation to the Faith) of all the prophets (a.s.). The height of acknowledgement is his firm belief in Tawhid and the height of Tawhid is the height of Ikhlas or the sincerity of purpose. "

If our creator, and the creator of all the creatures, is Allah (S.w.T.), then what relation do we have with anyone other than Him. Why do we consider others as our saviors? If truly our faith is that there is no god but Allah (S.w.T.) and every good is in His hands, then we don't have any right to stretch our hands for help in front of anyone else. It is by doing this that we give rise to hypocrisy. When man starts thinking that even the creatures are capable of solving problems for them and seeking recognition and respect in their eyes is a guarantee of wellbeing, then they veer away from Tawhid. The path of hypocrisy is laid for them now and satanic traits take root in their hearts.

If we are practitioners of Tawhid, then our prayers must be addressed towards Allah (S.w.T.).

When we think that He is Ever Present, then why should we look to anyone else. To the contrary, for the fulfillment of the purpose for which He has created us, why should we involve others. It is not proper that we make an exhibition of the performance of the obligatory acts

in front of others that they praise us. If we have firm faith on "Kamaal at-Tawhid al-Ikhlas - The height of Tawhid is sincerity of purpose", then we truly consider Him our Creator and Sustainer and deem Him the guide in all our affairs and don't attach .ourselves to others for help

Many Claims of Being Sincere

Most of human actions are contrary to the dictates of sincerity of purpose. If Allah (S.w.T.) is the Only Sustainer, He is the One Who gives and takes, He is the one who sends and calls back, all the charity is in His control, then why do we give undue importance to circumstances and causes? Whenever there are ups and downs in life, then why do we bitterly complain about the Divine Decree of Allah (S.w.T.) (Qada wa Qadar)? Discussion on this topic will be time consuming. Many a time it happens that a person thinks all his life that he is sincere. But when he reaches the end of the life, his eyes open wide. He then realizes that his entire life was spent with insincerity to Allah (S.w.T.). Many are men who spend their lives bowing their heads to many gods; even .then they consider themselves monotheists

A person thought one night to go to the mosque and spend the whole night in prayer there in total dedication and sincerity. Leaving behind his comfortable bed, he reached the mosque and commenced the prayer on the rough prayer mat. After sometime, in the darkness, he heard a voice. He

thought someone else was busy praying in the mosque. He also thought that it was good that someone else too was in the lonely mosque who will certainly mention to others that he was praying there the entire night. The man continued his prayers with more dedication and interest. He modulated his voice to give to it a touch of pathos. He spent the whole night in that way. At dawn he noticed a dog cowering in a corner of the mosque. Perhaps it had come into to mosque to save itself from the extreme cold outside. This proves that he was praying the whole night to make a show to the .dog

Satan's Laments

If you are people of sincerity, then your concern will be only with Him and consider only Him as your Only Accomplisher (Kaar Saaz) of all your affairs. Pomp and pelf of the world should not overwhelm you. The causer of recognition or ignominy for you is only Him. It is He who sends ailments and also it is He who cures them. All the affairs .in this world trace their origin to Him

When a person who has reached the stage of Sincerity of Faith (Ikhlas al-Iman) .enters the mosque, Satan becomes restless and starts lamenting

But this situation is very difficult and requires intense effort. This is a task of great valor that man comes in conflict with Satan and does the Major Jihad with his own baser instinct (Nafs al-Ammara) till he attains the status of a

.(person of sincerity (Ahl al-Ikhlas

Three Types of Persons are Accountable

I would like to quote a tradition in this connection. It is recorded in Mahajjat al-Baida that on the Day of Judgement three groups will be the first to be called for giving the .account of their deeds

The first will be the group of 'Ulama or scholars. Allah (S.w.T.) will inquire of them as to what they were doing in the world and how did they use the knowledge that was imparted to them? They will say, "O Sustainer! You are witness that we spread knowledge in the world, kept ourselves occupied with teaching and education, we ".authored books and guided the people in general

Allah (S.w.T.) will say in reply, "You are lying because you did everything to be termed an 'Allama (an erudite scholar) and a wise person. This was mere show and its "?compensation was the people's praises for you. What do you expect from Us now

The second group will be that of rich persons. They will be asked by Allah (S.w.T.), "How did you use the wealth given to you by Us?" They will say, "O Allah! You are witness that we spent the wealth in your way. We did good turns, helped the beggars and needy and didn't go to our graves with any regrets about the wealth that we left "!behind

Allah (S.w.T.) will reply to them, "You are liars! You spent on others because you wanted them to praise you and call you magnanimous and your name appeared

on the newspapers and other media. You got the compensation for your good deeds "in the world itself. What else do you expect from Us now

It has come in a tradition that seven groups will be in the shadow of Allah (S.w.T.)'s) Skies. One of this group will be of those who remain incognito while they do charity and spend in the way of Allah (S.w.T.) is such a manner that when their right hand does the charity, the left will remain unaware of the act. Other than Allah (S.w.T.) none knows about this good deed. When Hadrat Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (a.s.) used to give money in the way of Allah (S.w.T.), he used to cover his face with his shawl that he remained incognito while doing this good deed. Even this went to the extent that the persons whom the Imam (a.s.) personally helped, used to complain that he has not helped them! This was because of the fact that at the time of getting the help, the beneficiaries were unable to recognize the benefactor. A person might spend huge amounts in charity to get praises from others and for showing off. Their charity will (.then have no weight

The third group will be that of the persons who were martyred during Jihad. They will be asked, "What have you done in the world? They will reply, "O Allah! You know well that we laid our lives for Your cause. Got wounded and bore hardships." Allah (S.w.T.) ,then would rejoin

In the field of battle, rather than truly fighting for our cause, you wanted to make a" show of your valor to others and to gather booty. Truly, you have not given your life for Us!" Some persons recite the Holy Qur'an very much, but they intone it like a song to impress about the control of their voices on others. Such persons too may not get .any reward in the Hereafter

It is narrated that one person came to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq and said, "O Master! I recite the Holy Qur'an in my house and the people in my house hear it. Sometimes my voice even travels outside of my house to the hearing of the commuters on the street. What do you say about this?" The Imam replied, "Keep the pitch of your voice in the middle that your recitation does not give the impression that you are making a show ".of it

Perhaps there is a point in this that the person may not be making a show to the members of his family, therefore he was asked to recite at an average pitch that the inmates got the benefit of hearing and getting benefit from it. He also wanted the voice not to travel outside his premises that others hear it and think that he was .making a hypocritical show of his prowess

It is a strange thing that till a person takes refuge in the fortress of sincerity of purpose he is not safe from the machinations of

:Satan. This is the stage where a person prays from the depths of his heart

أَمَّن يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ

Or, Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil... ((Sura an-Naml, ۲۷:۶۲

O Allah! The hardships are huge and we had been so complacent and careless that only Your benevolent attention can ameliorate our situation. We were in self-deception that we became the victims of insincerity thinking that we were sincere to You. Once the curtain rises and the scene of death and the Barzakh (Purgatory) become evident to us, we would realize the misapprehension we were in that we !thought ourselves to be the replicas of Salman

Out through our lives we have been under the misapprehension that we had been on pilgrimage to Karbala al-Mu'alla and Mashad al-Muqaddas. There is no doubt that pilgrimage is highly felicitous, but the urge to go on the tour must be from the depth of the heart. When one goes to perform the Hajj, the title of 'Haji' is prefixed with his name. That can be tantamount to making a show of his pilgrimage. In a nutshell, there will be need for sincerity in whatever we do and it should not be attended by an .element of show

The Highest Stages of Sincerity

The Martyrs of Karbala are not called the chiefs of the martyrs just for the sake of calling. Among these martyrs, the lowest according to the worldly rating, was a Nubian slave. He said, "O Maula! I am very lowly from

the point of view of pedigree and descent! I am dark of visage. The smell of my body is unpleasant. It is true that I am not fit to sacrifice myself in your way! Be kind on me and accept me as a ransom (Fidya)!"

The Imam (a.s.) didn't give him permission to go and battle. He cries and says, "Master! In good times I had been the consumer of the leftovers of your table! How can I abandon in times of hardship?" The person pleaded with the Imam so much that he was given permission to go to the field of battle. He, at last, attained the felicity of Martyrdom. What act could be better than this!

The Twenty Seventh Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

He said: Then by Thy Might I will surely make them live an evil life, all, Except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones. (Sura Sad, ۳۸:۸۲-۸۳)

Sincerity and Good Deeds

Pure and good is the thing that is free of impurities. For example: pure gold that is only gold and nothing other than that. It has not been alloyed with copper or any other metal. Or pure milk that has been described in the Holy Qur'an thus,

مِّمَّا فِى بُطُونِهِ مِن بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَّبَنًا خَالِصًا سَآئِغًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ

..We gave you to drink of that which is in their bellies, from betwixt the refuse and the blood, pure milk, palatable to the drinkers. (Sura an-Nahl, ۱۶:۶۶)

Similarly, action too, despite

the environment of the carnal desires around, should be pure and in the way of Allah (S.w.T.). This means that when one seeks nearness to Allah (S.w.T.), there should not be any worldly desire in the heart of the person. We have already said that this is a .spiritual act that doesn't depend on expressing in words and coming in the heart

Worldly Honor Too Is In Allah (S.W.T.)'s Hand

One should ascertain whether the motive for any action is with Allah (S.w.T.)'s love and nearness in mind or is it is a worldly motive. For example: If you are going to make an address from the pulpit, whether it is to please Allah (S.w.T.) or to earn money and fame. If you are doing this for all the three, then remember, it is not possible to bring them together. It is not possible that an act is done to please Allah (S.w.T.) and to please a human being at the same time. If the act is not performed with sincerity towards Allah (S.w.T.), neither will the act be acceptable by Him, nor will the worldly purpose be accomplished. But if an act is performed solely for the pleasure of Allah .(S.w.T.), He might give to the person worldly gain too

About Malik Dinar

In his early days Malik Dinar was a bullion merchant. He had made good progress in the profession. Then avarice got better of him and he thought ways of becoming the trustee of the Jami'i al-Umawwi Masjid (Umayyad Mosque) in Damascus. He was desirous of this position because lots

of funds would be at his disposal as the trustee. In this greed Malik disposed all his assets and distributed the money in charity. Since the trustee is expected to be extremely pious and simple, he went and stayed in the mosque. Whenever he found any person entering the mosque, he would stand up and start praying.

The purpose was to attract the attention of the people to his piety so that his candidature for the trusteeship could be clinched. But in course of time people understood his insincere plan. They were covertly, and sometimes overtly, making fun of him. They would ask him, "O Malik! What is your intention?" A lot of time passed in this manner. Then he realized that in his avarice he had reduced himself to the condition that he was in. Now that all the people have gauged his plan, there was no chance of him getting the trusteeship. He thought that his fate was neither to get the worldly benefit nor of the Hereafter.

That night, with a broken heart, Malik expressed penitence (istighfar) to Allah (S.w.T.) and sought His forgiveness for his sins throughout the night. He was surprised the next morning to see the same persons who were insulting him earlier, met him with due respect and asked him to pray for them. In due course of time it was well known in Syria that Malik was a man of great piety. Now the important persons came to him and offered to him the

trusteeship of the mosque. He declined the offer politely and said that he had acquired the Good will of Allah (S.w.T.) with difficulty and that he was not in the need .of anything else

The unlucky person who is devoid of sincerity will definitely be one who loses the .(world as well as the Hereafter (Khasira ad-duniya wal aakhira

Futile Prayer

We have already mentioned that the acceptance of prayers is dependent on the sincerity of the person. The prayer that is devoid of sincerity is an exercise in futility and is useless. The lowest is the prayer through which one seeks the pleasure of both the Creator and the creatures. In such acts those elements of hypocrisy are present that are counted among major sins. The prayer of a lower category than this is that .(which is not even for the mental pleasure (Hiz an-Nafsani

Sometimes the nature of a person plays its part in his intent. For example: It is Friday and a warm day. The person wishes to go to the swimming pool to cool himself and, at the same time, perform his obligatory bath. Now, who could say that whether his intent is to swim or to have his mandatory Friday bath. Or, for example: It is a cold day and the person wishes to have his obligatory Friday bath and use a public bath to warm his body as well. These acts are devoid of sincerity. If you wish that your actions are absolutely sincere, then there should not be

.any element of mental pleasure in them

Supplement of any act is permissible (Mubah), if it assumes the status of collateral act in perpetuity; otherwise it voids the spirit of the act. By sincerity (Ikhlas) we mean that there is no supplementary or subsidiary purpose. For example: if one has to perform his obligatory bath and he combines it with a swim or a visit to the public bath, then !the person has, in reality, two intents, and the obligatory bath in this case goes void

Praise and Appreciation of People

It is a very delicate situation. One should seek Allah (S.w.T.) protection. Sometimes man remains insensitive and with one word of worldly praise he forgets Allah (S.w.T.) and spoils his Hereafter. He doesn't strike a deal with Allah (S.w.T.) for perpetual .welfare, but for some worldly praise he dedicates himself to the mundane ends

Worse than this is the ambitious person who is not satisfied if he gets the Du'a al-Maghfirat (prayer for Deliverance) after his death but wants people to remember him thereafter and sing his praises. He will be so much engrossed in the love for fame that .even after his death people will praise him

A good name after the death of a person is useful. But the purpose in his lifetime must have been only getting the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.) with his good deeds and not for the search of name and fame. If the person had ulterior designs while doing good deeds, however much the world praised him, his Hereafter will not

.be good

?Is Praise Beneficial

If a person is amoral and because of some misapprehension people admire and praise him, will it in anyway benefit him to the extent of the point of a needle or ?reduce his retribution to the extent

Of what use is the popularity a person enjoyed in this world when he is in purgatory (Barzakh). When a person is in the angelic plane of existence (Aalam al-Malkut) what relationship will he have with the physical plane of existence (Aalam al-Mulk) that have different traits of character? If the person has departed from here with the felicity of Iman, and was virtuous and sincere in his life, then his actions were for Allah (S.w.T.) rather than for worldly fame. You must pray for the deliverance of the Muslims after their death and not sing poems in their praise. For his good deeds every individual will receive rewards. But otherwise, whether lights are put on his tomb or .there is dust flying around there, it will not make any difference

Ahmad Bin Tawlan the Reciter of Qur'an

If someone has departed from this world with good deeds behind him, and he had staunch faith in the Book of Allah (S.w.T.), then recitation of the Qur'an over his grave will be beneficial to him. Otherwise, you must have heard the story of Ahmad Bin Tawlan that has been related by Allama Damiri in Hayat al-Haywaan. That person was a king in Egypt. When he died the Egyptian Government appointed a Qari to recite the Qur'an near his grave. Suitable compensation was

.to be paid to him for this work. He got busy reciting the Book at the grave

One day news came that the Qari had absconded. After much search the policemen located him and asked the reason why he ran away. He couldn't gather enough courage to spell out the reason but was asking to be relieved from his work. The authorities said that if he considered the compensation low, it can as well be raised. He said that however much they pay him, he was unwilling to do the job. They were .confused and said that until he said the true reason, they would not release him

The man said, "Some days ago, the person in the grave complained to me. He caught hold of my collar and said, 'Why are you reciting the Qur'an at my grave? ' I replied, ' I have been appointed by the authorities to do it to earn Reward for you.' The dead man said, 'Rather than giving any benefit to me, every verse you recited was giving wind to the fire of Retribution for me. It was being said to me that why I neglected hearing the recitation during my worldly life? Why didn't I follow the precepts laid ".down by the Holy Book? "Now I request you to kindly absolve me of this duty

In the court of Allah (S.w.T.) nothing is more beneficial than truth and sincerity. With your tongue you might say a hundred thousand times, "Qurbatan il-Allah" but if there is

no truth and sincerity of intent, then mere utterance of the words will not be of any .use

The human psyche is either in search of recognition amongst the fellow humans or to derive pleasure for itself. He thinks that he is a person of much virtue. But when he sees the roster of his deeds on the Day of Judgement, he will be surprised to know .that his life had been one of selfishness and for satisfaction of baser instincts

But if action is accompanied with sincerity then even a bit of it could be sufficient to elevate his status and become the cause of the person's deliverance. Even two genuflections of prayer, offered with sincerity and dedication of the heart, can qualify one for the Heaven. A lifetime of prayer for the insincere purpose of show will be of no .use at all

Sayyid Ibn Tawoos says that the prayers that are motivated by the fear of the Hell and the craving for the Heaven has an element of selfishness, although correct according to the norms of Faith. It will be better than the other acts of the person. Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) has said, "O Allah! I pray to You not with the fear of the Hell and for getting admittance to the Heaven. I pray to You only because You are ".befitting for my prayer

In the light of this saying the prayer of a person with personal motives of rewards will .be of lower felicity

The Prayer of an Erudite Scholar

You must have heard

that the two Rakat of the prayer of an Aalim is rated more than the prayers of an ignorant (Jahil) person offered over a period of a full year. The reason for this is that an erudite scholar knows the facts and comprehends them. He understands all the dangers of sensual pleasure. As against this, an ignorant person doesn't know what will be the consequence of which act. He worships himself and others, thinking all the time that he was praying to Allah (S.w.T.)!

Similarly you must have heard that praying in congregation behind an Aalim Imam is a thousand times more felicitous than praying alone. The reason is that the Imam has superior knowledge. And is never away from Ikhlas or sincerity in prayer.

The Father the Son

During his journey to Karbala, Imam Husayn (a.s.) felt sleepy at one stage. Then he told to his companions that he had heard a herald who was telling aloud from the skies, "This group moves and death travels behind them!"

'Ali Akbar asked, "O father! Are we not on the side of the right and will our death not be in Allah's cause?" The Imam replied, "Yes!" 'Ali Akbar said, "Then, we needn't worry about death!" What felicity will be bigger than getting martyred in the way of Truth!" These words are the reflections of the heart of a person who has sincerity of purpose (Ikhlas). Allah (S.w.T.) has made the words the mirror of the heart. There is neither any worldly desire in these words nor is

the craving for name and fame. They knew it fully well that Martyrdom was fated for them!

The Twenty Eighth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِکَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَّا عِبَادَکَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

He said: 'Then by Thy Might I will surely make them live an evil life, all, Except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones.' (Sura Sad, ۳۸:۸۲-۸۳)

Hope for Getting the Heaven and Fear of the Hell

Whether an action is mandatory (Wajib) or optional (Mustahab), they must all be performed with sincerity, because they are of value only if they are done with sincerity of purpose.

The lowest state of Ikhlas or sincerity is that the motive of the act is not to make a show but the fear of retribution or the search for rewards from Allah (S.w.T.). For example: when one awakes for the morning prayer (Fajr) and does the ablutions, his motive for the act should be that the prayer is mandatory and if he didn't perform it, he would become liable for retribution. Or, for example: when a person fasts, the motivation for abstaining from intake of food and sensual acts for fourteen hours will be the expectation of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Reward for the act.

This is the minor or the first stage of Ikhlas in which a person's action is rated right. The Retribution that the person fears, Allah (S.w.T.) keeps him safe from that. The Reward that the person wishes to get, Allah (S.w.T.) gives him.

The motivation of a person should not be only achieve popularity in the

eyes of the people of the world, or the fear of their taunts and criticism. For example, the purpose of his going for Hajj should be to seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s pleasure than making a show of his status to the people. If the desire is to show-off to the people, .then his act is void and sinful

This is a very difficult situation. Sometimes a person gets entangled in his own personality and starts suspecting himself. For example: He expresses abhorrence of bad actions or does Amr bil Ma'roof, that is, he abides by the Commandments and thinks that he has accomplished one act mandated by Allah (S.w.T.). But the real motivation of his act might be to show off to others and to impress on them that he .has great love for his religious duties. Such behavior is counted amongst major sins

Thirty Years of Prayers and Supplications

This is the story of a pious person that has to be seriously considered and a lesson is .drawn from it

The person of piety always used to be the first to reach the mosque for the congregation. He invariably stood in the first row. He mostly used to be the last to leave the mosque after the congregational prayer was over. All of thirty years this was his regime. He never missed even one of the five daily obligatory prayers at the mosque during the period. One day he had some urgent task on hand and he couldn't make to the mosque for the prayer on time. When he

reached there, the prayer was in progress. He had to join the congregation in the last row. After the prayer, when people were flocking out of the mosque looked at him with surprise. He was very sad that the people noticed him offering his prayer .standing in the last row. He felt very ashamed

Later on he realized that there was nothing to be ashamed of. He told to himself, "You unfortunate person! These last thirty years you strived to stand in the first row for the prayers seem not for the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.) but to receive and attract the attention of the people. If your efforts were in the way of Allah (S.w.T.), it must have been His Will that you didn't reach the mosque in time to join the first row!" At last he repented for his insincere behavior during the last three decades and offered past .thirty years of prayers as lapsed or Qadha prayers

Treat the Psychic Ailments

This story should be a pointer for all of us. We don't say that one should not stand in the first row of the congregation, but it should be for the felicity of the act and not to make a show to the people. If on certain days one doesn't get a place in the first row, and he has to join the second or the third or the last row, there is nothing to be ashamed of. One should not feel that he is a man of learning and it is

his privilege to always get a place in the first row at the prayer. But even if he has to stand with a child or an ignorant, uneducated person, he should not feel hesitant even .for a while

These are psychic ailments that are destructive for men. It is also the duty of the Imam of the congregation that he should not give undue importance to the numbers at a congregation. Even if only one person joins him for prayer, the congregation is complete. Whether there is one follower (Muqtadi) or a thousand, the congregation is !complete

Penitence from Sanctimony and Related Acts

It is therefore necessary that the motivation of a person for the acts should be fear of retribution and hope for Allah (S.w.T.)'s rewards. A better motivation than this will be just seeking the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.). If there is any other motivation, it is nothing else but being sanctimonious. If one has been offering prayer with such sanctimonious motives in the past, then he should offer Qadha prayer for that period .with proper intent. This holds good for both Wajib and Mustahab prayers

Similarly related matters too are in the category of sanctimonious acts. For example: If a person wants to go for a pilgrimage to Mashad but his main motive is to enjoy the .good weather and abundance of fruits there, then his pilgrimage becomes secondary

Therefore, if a man performs a felicitous act, he should not become proud of that. He should think over the motive for the performance of the act. He

can say that the act was in the way of Allah (S.w.T.) only when he had, with full determination, true intent and from the depth of his heart, performed the act for the .(.pleasure of Allah (S.w.T

It is narrated that during the days of the Prophet (S) on an expedition of Jihad, one infidel was mounted on a white mule during the battle. One person from the ranks of the believers was attracted to this mule. He told to himself," I shall slay this infidel and become the owner of the mule." With this intent he went forward. But before he could do anything to the person, the infidel took preemptive action and slayed him. The !person became well known as qateel al-himaar - the man who got slayed for a mule

Just imagine, with what intent the man acted and what end he met with! In this market place there is transaction of only the truth and the right. Hypocrisy has no value here. Pity on the unfortunate person who enslaves himself to his own psyche and that even after giving up his life, he has destroyed his Hereafter. If a person, after laying down his life in Jihad, earns - Khasr ad-duniya wal aakhira - loss in this world .and the Hereafter, there is none more unfortunate than him

Therefore, it is necessary to perform acts with firm intent of earning the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.). This way not only the fulfilling of one's desires is assured but with

Allah (S.w.T.)'s support results might be much more than expected. Allah (S.w.T.) says :in the Holy Qur'an

مَن كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَهِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِی حَرْثِهِ وَمَن كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِی الْآخِرَهِ مِن نَّصِيبٍ

Whoever desires the gain of the hereafter, We will give him more of that gain; and whoever desires the gain of this world, We give him of it, and in the hereafter he has (no portion. (Sura ash-Shura, ۴۲:۲۰

Incidental Motives don't Negate Action

At this stage it is better to remind that incidental motives don't negate the actions. A person goes to the mausoleum of Imam Ridha (a.s.) with a wish to get felicity because the Imam (a.s.) has promised that on the Day of Judgement he will intercede on behalf of his friends. The person goes for the Ziyarat that with the Imam's intercession Allah (S.w.T.) will give him Reward equal to the performance of a Hajj. He thinks that, besides doing the Ziyarat, he would take the advantage of the season he would stay there for a week because plentiful high quality apricots will be available in Mashad. He will also enjoy the sweet melons available at that time. Since the person's main motive was to go for the Ziyarat and he thought of the availability of the fruits on .the side, his act of pilgrimage is not negated in any way

Ka'aba Situated in Hot Area

Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.), in one of his sermons in Nahj al-Balagha, says about the Hajj and its philosophy that Allah (S.w.T.) has located Ka'aba

in a place that is scorching hot and has no provision of bodily comfort. It has barren .hills around it and the land is devoid of any greenery

If it was Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish, He would have made His Holy Home the most pleasant place in the world! But this way the dedication, patience and motives of the pilgrims .would not be suitably put to test

For example: If Ka'aba were in Lebanon, then people would go there to enjoy the good climate, the lovely gardens and deviate from their main motive of seeking nearness to Allah (S.w.T.). The worldly comforts and diversions would affect their main .motivation of pilgrimage

We cannot say if the prosperity that has come to Arabia in the recent years and the comforts of travel and stay that have been organized for the Hajj pilgrimage, have in any way affected the motivation of the pilgrims. The journey for the Hajj too has become the cause of the promotion of trade and recreation. May Allah (S.w.T.) protect this great pilgrimage becoming a place where people start indulging in sensual .(pleasures (Hiz al-Nafs

The Travel Expense

No one should take any misunderstanding from our talk. We don't say that when you go to Makkah al-Mukarrama you should not eat good food and avoid the travel expenses, don't buy gifts for your friends and next of kin back home. In fact providing oneself better travel expenses is a legitimate act. Similarly buying good gifts for people too is desirable. Our purpose is only to

remind people that these should not become the main motivation for their journey for Hajj. The main motive should be the fear of retribution and the search for rewards. We have already said that when a person offers prayers seeking protection from retribution and search for reward, Allah (S.w.T.) doesn't disappoint him. But if the .intent and motivation is not pure, then the prayer is rendered futile

It is narrated in Ma'aani al-Akhbar that Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) went near the head of a sick Shi'a who was in the throes of death. When he (a.s.) inquired about his condition, the person said, "I am in fear because of my past sins! I am hoping for Allah's Kindness on me!" The Imam (a.s.) said, "A heart that has this feeling of hope and fear, Allah will give the person protection from the thing he is afraid of. Whatever "!the person hopes to get, Allah gives him

(.Transacting with Allah (S.w.T

This is a transaction in which there is no element of loss. In fact it has been guaranteed that good deeds have been termed Sa'ee Mashkoor or felicitous acts. It is only the worldly transaction that is dictated by instinct of greed that will be shaky. The transaction with Allah (S.w.T.) is definite and firm. There is no fear of loss in this :transaction. As Allah (S.w.T.) says

مَّن كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاء لِمَن نُّرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلاهَا مَذْمُومًا مَّدْحُورًا

Whoever desires this present life, We hasten to him therein what We

please for whomsoever We desire, then We assign to him the hell; he shall enter it (despised, driven away. (Sura al-'Isra, ۱۷:۱۸

The Twenty Ninth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

He said: 'Then by Thy Might I will surely make them live an evil life, all, Except Thy '.servants from among them, the purified ones

(Sura Sad, ۳۸:۸۲-۸۳)

Incidental Motivations Explained

Last evening we have said that presence of incidental motivations does not affect the quality of the main acts provided the main purpose of the act is to seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s .rewards and the fear of retribution. Today we discuss further on the subject

One person, with true spirit, Qurbatan ilallah, wants to go on Hajj this year. He also has the fear that he might expire before the time for Hajj arrives, and his end might be like that of Yahood and Nasara. Incidentally he also wishes that one thing that is rare in his place, and available in plenty at the Haramain ash-Sharifain he would like to buy and bring along or he would take a Persian carpet along with him while going for the Hajj and sell it there for profit. These thoughts and acts will not affect the quality of his pilgrimage that the motivation is incidental

As against this, another person who wants to transact worldly business and his motive is only to acquire monetary gains through his journey for the Hajj, his trip will not be acceptable as

a pilgrimage. From such an effort one cannot expect to get Allah (S.w.T.)'s Rewards. In .a nutshell, for every act we have to understand the true motive behind it

Compensation is not Justified

Now that the talk has reached this stage, I shall recount what is said in Urwat al-Wuthqa. We have already said that if prayer is accompanied with fear of retribution and expectation of Allah (S.w.T.)'s rewards, then it is correct. The only condition is that it should not be with a desire for worldly compensation as is generally with the Mustahab (desirable) acts. Briefly, every act that is for commercial transaction of give .and take is not counted as a prayer

For example, we hear that someone offered the prayer of Sayyida az-Zahra for the dissolution of his difficulties and he was successful, then it will be considered as compensation for his labors. It will not be termed as prayer and the reward he got was like the return for his labor in this world. He imagines that after fulfillment of his worldly desire he has to offer two genuflections of Salat ash-Shukr as if Allah (S.w.T.) !is needy of this prayer

?On What Support

Considering oneself owner of something in competition of Allah (S.w.T.) is a falsehood. What do you have that you would give to Allah (S.w.T.) and seek something in return from Him? For example: Consider the two genuflections of prayer that we have referred earlier in this talk. You stand up, you bend, then prostrate your forehead on the ground and with your

tongue you do the Dhikr. Now, think for a while: Who has given birth to you, who made your limbs, who has provided equity to your limbs and other parts of the body that you are capable of performing every action with ease? Who has provided the faculty of ?expression to the little clump of flesh in your mouth

As a matter of fact besides the motive of performing an act nothing is your own; even that faculty has been provided to you by Allah (S.w.T.)! What is it that you can give to Allah (S.w.T.) and claim something from Him in compensation? Whatever animate and inanimate things exist in the universe are His. This hand that you extend towards Him for help is His ! From your head to your toe, your entire existence, and your capabilities, and all your faculties are gifted to you by Him! He has made them subservient to you at His Will. When you make the intent for prayer, you are able ?easily to stand up. Who motivated your heavy body to become alert

More Fascinating than a Magnet

Abu 'Ali Sina says that people are fascinated with the magnet that pulls the needles towards it. But they are not surprised at the fact that how Allah (S.w.T.) has made the .(heavy body subservient to the categorical psyche (Nafs al-Natiqa

Have you ever acted as a pallbearer? Carrying the dead is not possible for a single person all alone. It is necessary to have a few persons for the task. Is the

?dead person not the same body that moved as he wished

Your wish to act and do certain things too has been endowed by Allah (S.w.T.). You cannot do anything against the Wish of Allah (S.w.T.):

وَمَا تَشَاؤُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاء اللَّهُ

(And you do not will anything except that Allah wills (Sura al-Insaan, ۷۶:۳۰)

!Nothing Fights for Nothing

Whatever is there in the world belongs to Allah (S.w.T.). He has provided the norms of rights and duties for the angels, jinns and men with His wisdom in His Holy Jurisprudence (Shari'ah). Everything that you give and whatever you take is only at His discretion. Everything, in the end, is destined towards Him.

You should therefore be careful in making transactions and seeking compensations in your prayers, lest all your efforts go in vain. Don't imagine for a moment that you have given money or taken money and strived hard for your goal. This will be tantamount to thinking that you have given a certain thing that belongs to you and now you expect to get rewards or retribution in return!

Remember! Man is just a creature of dust who exists for a fixed tenure in this world with the will and wish of Allah (S.w.T.). Don't value this temporary respite very much. After a very long time of death when his grave would go asunder, he will know that he was a creature of the dust.

Those hands were very strong that crafted the doll out of dust, put life into it and gave it the faculty of speaking, hearing

and seeing. Made it active and strong. And ultimately returned it back to its original .state of dust

مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى

From it (the earth) We created you and into it We shall send you back and from it will (We raise you a second time. (Sura Ta Ha, ۲۰:۵۵

When you recite the Ziyarat Aashura or Ziyarat al-Jamia, you must be aware of the fact as to who gave you the tongue and made it subservient to you. When we consider the causes of our optional acts, you surprise has no end that who gave us the wisdom and thinking for performing these acts? Who gave us the reasons to exist, ?gave us the capability to act and removed the impediments from our way

First of all, there is no possibility of compensation for the acts. We neither have wealth nor anything belongs to us for which we might expect compensation. We only have a !will that too is dependent on His Wish

........Then

?How Much is the Return for Actions

If return for actions is necessary, then let us see how much is our right for returns? O persons who pray, fast, perform the Hajj! If your actions are assessed, what should ?be the compensation in your view

Or those who pray in the nights and proudly claim that they remain awake the whole night in prayer and tell that they are practicing Tahajjud! Do they know what is the ?wage of a janitor who remains awake the whole night to guard the properties

Therefore, in accordance

with your own decision that there must be compensation for your action, honestly calculate how much compensation you deserve for your acts. You had been to the Hajj. What is the return for this act? You might not have suffered any monetary loss during the Hajj. You fasted during Ramadhan, which means that you had postponed your lunch by a few hours! There are lots of other people in the world, although they are not fasting, have to skip lunch because of their duties and circumstances. So what compensation you expect for performing the act that had been mandated by Allah ?(.(S.w.T

Unfortunate is the person who thinks that he must get returns from Allah (S.w.T.) for any act of his. He should hold the balance in his hands and do the accounting of plus !and minus

Expectation of Rewards

The motivation or otherwise of man's actions must be the promise of reward and punishment made by Allah (S.w.T.). Only in this situation his actions will be termed .legitimate and he will get rewarded

We should present our prayers in the court of Allah (S.w.T.) with extreme fear and dedication and with full knowledge that He is not needy of our prayers and the !acceptance thereof is solely dependent on His Wish and Will

To save oneself from selfishness and false pride in the court of Allah (S.w.T.), one should suppress the psyche to the utmost and adopt the feeling of utmost dependence and fear of Allah (S.w.T.) while in prayer. He should think in such a

way that he is present in the court of Graciousness and Kindness (Lutf wa Karam). Allah (S.w.T.) has promised recompense and is the motivator of his actions. All his .hopes rest in Him only

Wise Men are Not Proud of their Actions

The people of wisdom are never proud of their actions. A person is extremely ignorant and unwise who thinks of rewards for whatever good acts he does and keeps himself in the mirage of false hopes and expectations all his life. But while departing from this world when the sun of the reality dawns on him, then the truth gets revealed to him that what he thought was like a mountain was no more than a piece of straw! That .Day all the hidden things will become evident

The Glow Worm and the Diamond

A person was travelling through the woods in the darkness of night. His eyes fell on a shining object and he thought it was a diamond. He carefully picked it along with the soil in its vicinity and preserved it in a small box that he had in his pocket. The next morning he went to a jeweller and told him that he had an expensive diamond for sale. The jeweller asked him to fetch the diamond. The man said it is necessary to take utmost care and the jeweller must accompany him to his residence instead of fetching the diamond to the shop. The jeweller reluctantly agreed to go along with him. The man took out the small box with care from his safe. But when the box was

opened there was only a small quantity of soil and a dead glow-worm. The man wondered, what had happened to his diamond?!

When the jeweller asked for the facts, the man related what happened to him in the night. The jeweller said, "You foolish person! You have wasted my precious time! You had picked up a glow-worm in the night and thinking that it was a diamond you went through all the trouble!"

Tomorrow When the Acts Will be Balanced

O wise man! The prayer that you were offering in the thought that Allah (S.w.T.) needs it, in what expectation you were doing it? When tomorrow the truth is revealed, you will not get anything other than disappointment and humiliation.

Consider how the Prophets of Faith used to present themselves to Allah (S.w.T.) with humility and submissiveness. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (a.s.) submits to Allah (S.w.T.) in Du'a Hamza ath-Thumali in this manner:

O Allah! What am I that my act is considered of any value.

O Allah! Give us knowledge and understanding of the facts before it becomes too late for getting this comprehension!

The Thirtieth Talk

point

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاء وَالضَّرَّاء لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَّرَّعُونَ

We did afflict its folks with tribulation and adversity that haply they might grow humble. (Sura al-A'raaf, ٧:٩٤)

The State Of Tadharru or Humility is Essential for Isti'adha

The thirtieth aspect of Isti’adha is Tadharru. Sometimes Isti’adha demands that man .should be in a state of lamentation because otherwise Isti’adha remains ineffective

Tadharru means expressing ones helplessness and weakness through lamentation and expressing the predicament that the person is in. We have already

p: ۲۳۲

said during our earlier discussions that man is confronted with a very formidable enemy that he has to escape from his clutches and the enemy perpetually keeps chasing him. Man is absolutely incapable of confronting the enemy nor can he guard against his onslaught. Therefore he has to look elsewhere for help to ward off the evil adversary. In this situation he is like a small child who is chased by a venomous snake. The child runs scared and falls in the lap of his mother for help and protection from the reptile. This state is called the Isti'adha or the act of seeking help and protection !to ward off the enemy

Therefore when man understands that the accursed Satan, who is his mortal enemy, is about to attack him and he is all alone, helpless and utterly incapable of protecting himself, then he cries and laments for help from the Almighty Allah (S.w.T.). He says, "O Beneficent Allah (S.w.T.)! I plead that the accursed enemy is barking like a wild dog "!and attacking me

Tadharru Through Ma'thura or Transmitted Prayers

Whenever a situation presents itself that a person has to seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s Protection against the evil advances of Satan, then the importance of Tadharru is highlighted through the transmitted supplications. One of these supplications is Du'a :Hifdh min Sharri Iblis (Dua for Protection from the Evil of Satan) that runs like this

O Allah! Iblis is one of your creatures who is focusing his sights on me from such a" .place that I cannot see him

But You see him very well, while he is not empowered to see you! You have control over all his faculties. While he cannot interfere with what Your Wish and Will! O Allah (S.w.T.)! I, therefore, plead with You and seek Your help against him. O Sustainer! I don't have the capability to ward him off other than Your Help! O Allah (S.w.T.)! If Iblis sets his sights on me, You must take care of him! If he plans to cause me harm, You inflict Your curse on him! Save me from his plots. Make the burden of his enmity fall on his own neck! I am seeking Your munificence! O most Beneficent of those who do kindnesses! And the blessings of Allah be on Muhammad and his purified progeny."

Allah (S.w.T.) is Sufficient for His Creatures

There is no doubt that if someone presents himself with total Tadharru as an insignificant and hapless creature and seeks only His help, accepts Him as the sole deliverer and seeks deliverance through Him, then seeks His protection from Satan's evil acts, Allah (S.w.T.) will definitely take him in His Protection. After assuring Allah (S.w.T.)'s Protection, deliverance is assured! Therefore Allah (S.w.T.) Himself says:

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ

(Is not Allah sufficient for His servant? (Sura az-Zumar, ۳۹:۳۶

Recognizing the Enemy from Signs

Recognizing the enemy and being aware of his existence doesn't depend only on visual observation. But definite signs too are instrumental in this recognition. For example: If in the darkness of night, a stone comes from one direction and hits his face, and if there

is a shower of arrows on the person, then he knows for sure that the enemy is trying .to hurt him and is after his life and property

In such a situation, before investigating about the existence of the enemy, the person first tries to reach someplace of safety. If there is a house nearby, he knocks at the door and asks for shelter from the householder and trusts himself totally to his care and seeks his help against the aggression of the unknown enemy. Therefore, if any person has the fear of Satan's attack, although he cannot see him, he searches for .refuge from him

Satanic Attacks

If one says that neither Satan can be seen nor his attacks witnessed, then how could one expect to escape from his attacks? How could he seek protection from others !against a seemingly non-existent enemy

The reply to this is that Satan's attacks don't go unnoticed. They are manifested through the fears, doubts and restlessness that confront the hearts of people day and .night. He doesn't refrain a moment from this nefarious act of his

Some Humor

Someone asked a wise person whether Satan too sleeps like men. The reply was that if that were the case, he would have given some respite to men while he slept and in that period they would be safe! But we observe that man is not free from Satan's attacks. The educated reply is that Satan is not a physical being and it doesn't need .any rest or sleep

The Signs of Satanic Attacks

How would one know that

?the fears and doubts in the human hearts are the creations of Satan

The reply is that every thought that a person gets that creates doubts and fears about Allah (S.w.T.), the Prophet (S.), about the Day of Reckoning and makes the person restless is the creation of Satan. As against this, every thought of trust on Allah (S.w.T.), belief on the eternal life, peace of heart and mind is Rahmani, or Godly, in origin. Every doubt that takes one away from Allah (S.w.T.), deprives one of rewards, causes the visitation of Allah (S.w.T.)'s wrath is definitely the work of Satan. As against this, every thought that gives him the feeling of nearness to Allah (S.w.T.) and gives .him the hope of Reward is purely Rahmani

The Rahmani Thoughts

There are three types of thoughts that encompass the human mind on a continuous basis. The first are those about which the person has definite information that they are legitimate and therefore Rahmani. For example: When the time for prayer arrives, the thought comes that he must pray. Or, when an opportunity comes for him to spend in the way of Allah (S.w.T.), the thought comes that he must do the good turn, Silat ar-Rahm, that someone has come to him asking for monetary help. Forgive such persons who have harmed him. Be fair in transactions. In short, he gets thoughts .(.about acts that are legitimate as per the commands of Allah (S.w.T

The Satanic Thoughts

The second category is composed by the thoughts that can be defined without any

doubt of being satanic. They are all the exact opposite of the first category that we mentioned just now. In this category are all those fears and doubts that are contrary to the Shari'ah and wisdom. For example: While spending in the way of Allah (S.w.T.) getting doubts that there is paucity of means for personal needs, Or he thinks .whether it was necessary to incur the expense at that time

Perhaps a more essential need for spending might crop up later on. He may also think that another person is richer than him and more competent to provide help to the seeker than himself. If someone harmed him, he thinks of harming the person more in return. If some relative hurts him, he thinks of breaking all relations with him. If he heard that someone has done backbiting against him and revealed his faults to others, he thinks of revealing all the weaknesses of the person to others. Even he would think of making false allegations against the person. On the whole, in human affairs the satanic thoughts seem to play a dominant role and the person who practices the norms of - Awamir wa Nawahi - do's-and-don'ts takes care of them in .minute detail

Thoughts to Be Considered Seriously

The third category of thoughts that are not definitely satanic but they are proved to .be so when the person suffers because of them

Satan intends to make the person forgetful of Allah (S.w.T.) through the medium of these thoughts. He attacks the person while in

prayer. If the person gets shorn of dedication of the heart in the prayer, then it .becomes the playground of Satan. We present a fable here to illustrate the point

The Dreaming Milkman

It is said that a milkman was carrying a pail full of milk on his head from his village to the town. He thought how long he would carry this heavy burden every day. He decided to save a portion of the earning everyday in the future. When sufficient fund were accumulated, he would buy a pair of sheep. The sheep will multiply and he would have many lambs. These will form a good flock. He would take them daily to the forest for grazing. In the forest he might be forced to pick up a quarrel with another person. If the man hurt his son, he would box the person. His imagination was so fertile that he thought the scene was really happening. So he raised his fist to box the head of the person. But, in fact the fist hit the pail of milk with a thud and the earthen pail fell off .his head and shattered spilling all the contents on the ground

Fear of the Past or Future

Sometimes Satan tries to bring back the thoughts of past events in the mind of a person to make him sad. His plan will be to make the person bitter about Allah .(S.w.T.)'s Wish

Worse than this, Satan puts all sorts of negative fears in the mind of the person about a bleak future. For example: What

will happen tomorrow? Things may go topsy-turvy. What would he do about it? He will neither have interest in prayer nor in any other virtuous act. He forgets that before these depressing feelings leave him, he might die. In that event he would be guilty of forsaking the mandatory acts.

Pitiable

Some years ago a person sold a piece of real estate at thirty times its purchase price. After some days the buyer resold it for a price as high as ten times the price at which he purchased from him.

The person became a victim of satanic thought of disappointment and jealousy. He started cursing himself for hurrying with the sale. He cried and worried for most of a week. When the pressure became impossible to bear, he mixed lime with sulphur and committed suicide by eating it.

Another person sold his property for good price and invested the proceeds on another property. Later on he found that his deal was not good. No one was willing to buy his new acquisition even at a third of its value. As a result the person succumbed to the pressure of the loss.

The Fear for Tomorrow

Thirty years ago a stock trader became insolvent due to the slump in the market. Because of this shock he stopped going out of his house. Whatever assets he had left with him, he was gradually liquidating to eke out a frugal existence. He was worrying that if things continued the same way, how long he will continue to provide livelihood for himself

and his family. He estimated the value of his remaining assets and divided that by the amount required for a month's expenses. He arrived at the conclusion that he could carry on for the next three years with the current monthly expenses. He started brooding as to what will happen after three years. He was wondering that he might have to come on the road begging. All his life he was a respectable trader. How will he !be able to extend his hands before others for help

Getting overwhelmed by satanic fears and doubts he consumed poison and .committed suicide

There are umpteen such examples that can be recounted. One instance is sufficient .to impress that Satan influences the human heart during such adversities

Generally we hear that a particular student has committed suicide because of failing his examination. We also hear that a youth ended his life after losing an important .competition

We might say that man is under the pressure of satanic fears and despite all efforts . .he is unable to catch the devil by his horns. He is literally helpless

But we say that this weakness is because of the total absence and lack of faith, or paucity of faith, on Almighty Allah (S.w.T.). Such persons don't have total faith that Allah (S.w.T.) is the Absolute Sustainer; all the bounties of this world have been provided by Him. Man grabs these bounties with both hands, but instead of thanking Him, he generally is ungrateful. He values causes more than the circumstances

and instead of depending on Allah (S.w.T.) (Tawakkul) he pursues the causes and .forgets that death and destruction are obvious

Angel Versus Satan

point

When on the one hand Satan introduces thoughts in the heart of a person that are destructive of the faith, on the other hand the angels appointed by Allah (S.w.T.) to keep company with the person give him thoughts of benevolence and virtue. Definitely if Satan tells a person to commit suicide to rid himself of the unbearable cares, the angels warn him not to do such a precipitate act that he would render himself unfortunate and his Hereafter would be destroyed. But a person who had .been following Satan all his life will not see reason

There is another way Satan overwhelms people. In the beginning he encourages them to do good deeds. But in fact they ultimately lead to evil. For example: He introduces a Mustahab (desirable) thought in a person's heart to nullify some of his Wajib (mandatory) acts. Satan even tempts the person to commit some sinful act in the process. Even he misguides the person to wrongly consider a sinful act as prayer. The man in his ignorance carries on these sinful acts. Satan persuades the man to do .the mandatory things and keeps domineering him to convert virtue into vice

Since these machinations of Satan are very subtle and secret, man generally falls into the trap. Therefore one has to be alert to these things. To explain this aspect a few .examples are given

۱. In Nahi Anil Munkar (Denying The Forbidden), Irtikab Or Commission Of Munkar Or Forbidden

A person sees someone

urinating in the direction of the Qibla. Instead of politely advising the person that the act is prohibited (Haram) and impressing upon him the sanctity of the direction in which the Ka'aba or Qibla is situated, he starts haranguing him. He sees another person urinating in a standing posture and tells him angrily that he was doing it like a dog instead of politely telling him that this way the urine, which is unclean (Najis) would splash on his trousers and limbs and the right way is to do it in a sitting posture. If the person thinks that by such impolite and hurting behavior he is doing Nahi 'anil Munkar, stopping someone from doing the prohibited (Haram), he is the guilty of the Munkar himself by adopting the impolite and hurting manner of trying to reform the .persons

Theological Education of Children .۲

The son of a person doesn't offer his mandatory prayers. His first duty is to advise him nicely and affectionately to cultivate the habit of regularity in prayer. If from the beginning the father adopts harsh measures of reprimanding and bodily punishments, or stopped his pocket money, then the child would turn stubborn and might also start stealing money to meet his needs. In this situation the father will be a .sinner from the point of view of Nahi 'anil Munkar

Reducing the Recitation of The Holy Qur'an to a Show .۳

A person has good voice and is also conversant with Tajweed or the right way of intonation of the text of the Holy Qur'an. Satan induces him to recite loudly that people

listen to his reading and both will derive felicity from the act. But the main intent of Satan here will be to dominate his psyche to make a show of his good voice and prowess at the recitation of the Book and feel proud at the appreciation and accolades from others. This way, instead of earning the Goodwill of Allah (S.w.T.), he will become the subject of His ire and deprive himself of the Reward for the Mustahab !act

The Pulpit Arch: the Playfield of Satan .۴

A person is well versed in the knowledge of the Faith. Satan persuades him to guide the people and answer their difficult questions. But at the same time he introduces the element of pride in their hearts for their erudition. The person writes a book that is definitely a service to the community. But in the eyes of Allah (S.w.T.) his effort is .negated because of the pride the person feels for his scholarship

Another scholar, who is a person of great power of speech and oration, is told by Iblis that the pulpit and the arch (Mihrab) are the rightful places for the Prophet (S) and the Imam and that he is their successor. He must guide the people, instruct them about the rewards for prayer and supplication and encourage them to adopt piety and Tawakkul. But at the same time Satan introduces the instinct of pride, greed and urge for having sycophants around him. As the interest of the person in the pulpit and the arch increases in the person, in

the same proportion his status diminishes. As a result the steps of the pulpit become .the way to Hell for him and the arch the pit of Hell

Alone With a Stranger Woman .۵

Stranger (Non-Mahram) man and woman being together in privacy can be a precursor to many a sin. Satan is always on the lookout for such situations. This sort of .a situation is ideal for him to cause the destruction of the parties concerned

Man should know that loneliness and privacy with a non-Mahram, even if it is for the purpose of prayers, is not only the cause of disputes but is Haram (forbidden) too. .Even in such a situation prayer too is void

To understand the problems related with privacy and loneliness with strange women, .we refer you to our eighth talk pertaining to Barseesa

The Acid Test For Good Evil is the Holy Shari'ah

One might say that whenever a doubt comes across the heart of a person about a certain act, he should as well abstain from it for the fear of it being satanic, and even if .it is legitimate, the doubt might turn it sinful

Our reply to this contention, may Allah (S.w.T.) forbid, is not that the virtuous acts and prayers to Allah (S.w.T.) should be avoided. What we mean is that one should try to be .in a state of Isti'adha to the Almighty

To further illustrate our point, it is necessary to say that every thought that comes to the heart of a person should be weighed in the scale of Shari'ah. If it is proved to be in accord with

the Commands of Allah (S.w.T.), then he should beware of satanic doubts and perform the act purely for the pleasure of Allah (S.w.T.). This is very necessary because Satan is always on a lookout for opportunities to disrupt the prayers of the person for .(.coming near to Allah (S.w.T

Treatment Through Isti’adha is Essential

The only remedy for the person is to keep at arm's length from Satan and seek Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection against his intrigue. Therefore it is binding on man that at the beginning of every virtuous act, whether Mustahab (optional) or Wajib (mandatory), he must do Isti’adha by saying audhu billahi min ash shaitanir rajeem in such a manner that the heart is totally with the tongue. To be precise, every good act, about veracity of which the Shari’ah approves, should be performed implicitly but during the performance he should continue seeking Allah (S.w.T.)'s protection against Satan that the task is accomplished without any blemish and gets Allah (S.w.T.)'s approval and .acceptance

Identity of Satan in the Holy Qur’an

Allah (S.w.T.) has introduced Satan at many places in the Qur’an as the enemy of man. .He has also warned man to beware of Satan's intrigues and to keep away from him

إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاء وَأَن تَقُولُواْ عَلَى اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

He only enjoins you evil and indecency, and that you may speak against Allah what (you do not know (Sura al-Baqara, ۲:۱۶۹

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَن لَّا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! that you should not serve the Shaitan? Surely

(he is your open enemy (Sura Ya Sin, ۳۶:۶۰

Therefore, one who has Faith in Allah (S.w.T.), His Prophet (S) and the Qur’an, should .deem it necessary to be a sworn enemy of Satan and abhor friendship with him

It is very clear from these discussions that friendship with Satan means getting dominated by the doubts created by him and following his dictates. Enmity of Satan means defying his temptations and keeping steadfast on the Commandments of Allah .(.(S.w.T

Defying Satan is a Difficult Task

Since Satan's temptations and intrigues are all compatible with the sensual desires of .human beings, they are very difficult to be contended with

For example: A person is very fond of honey and has sufficient quantity available with him. But an eminent physician is present there and tells him that honey is harmful for him and that he should abstain from consuming it. Another person tells him that the physician is a quack and therefore he is advising you not to take honey. In fact he is envious of you that you possess a lot of honey and he doesn't have any himself. In ?such a situation how can we expect the person to give ear to the physician

Or, a youth sits at a lonely place with a young damsel and the accursed Satan upbraids them to commit a foul deed. With this end Satan uses all his powers of persuasion to involve them in the sin and it will be very difficult for the persons to defy .and keep to the legitimate (Rahmani) path

Umar Ibn Sa’d and Satanic Rahmani Thoughts‘

Umar‘

Ibn Sa'd, who was a worldly person greedy of power, committed the satanic act of fighting with Imam Husayn (a.s.) to get the emirate of Rayy as reward from the accursed Yazid. But he refused to accept the Rahmani thought conveyed by his father Saad b. al-Waqqas through his friend Kamil. The details of this are mentioned in the .books of Maqatil

Satan's Task is to Tempt

As a hungry dog doesn't leave a place where there are bones, Satan doesn't go away from hearts that have the filth of carnal desires. Satan will not allow that person to .perform any act properly

Our statement proves that the cause of ruination of men is their own carnal desire and their temptations of Satan. He works as a catalyst for these activities in the minds .of men

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعْدَ الْحَقِّ وَوَعَدتُّكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِيَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن سُلْطَانٍ إِلاَّ أَن دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلاَ تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُواْ أَنفُسَكُم مَّا أَنَاْ بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِيَّ إِنِّي كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِن قَبْلُ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

And the Shaitan shall say after the affair is decided: 'Surely Allah promised you the promise of truth, and I gave you promises, then failed to keep them to you, and I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you obeyed me, therefore do not blame me but blame yourselves: I cannot be your aider (now) nor can you be my aiders; surely I disbelieved in your associating me with Allah before; surely it is

(the unjust that shall have the painful punishment.' (Sura Ibrahim, ۱۴:۲۲

On the Day of Judgement, when the people destined for the Hell complain to Satan about the way he tempted and misled them, he will say, "Whatever promises Allah made to you were right and whatever I promised was absolutely wrong but it was your mistake that you trusted my promises. I have never forced you into anything but only invited you to sin and you complied with the invitation. Why do you now make me the target of your complaints? Today neither can anyone help you nor do I have any use of you. In the world you treated me equal to Allah and now your fate is to bear the ".hardships of Hell

Satan thus played a dominating role in the destruction of man by tempting him to yield to the carnal desires. In other words, the internal enemy of man, the desires, and .Satan, the external enemies join hands and render him helpless

The Poor Complainants

If man turns towards Allah (S.w.T.) in this predicament and pleads with Him for his helplessness and seeks His Protection against the intrigue of Satan, Allah (S.w.T.) .definitely listens to the appeals of the weak and relieves them from difficulties

:Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (a.s.) says in one of his supplications

Only Your Munificence can save me from Your retribution, or my humility and" ".lamentations would come to my rescue

:In another supplication the Imam (a.s.) says

We are those defenseless people whose protection You have made imperative on" Yourself. We

".are the victims whom You have promised to relieve of their hardships

:Another supplication of the Imam (a.s.) goes like this

Because of suspicion and weakness of faith Satan took my reins in his hands. I am" scared of his bad company and my psyche is in his evil clutches. I seek Your protection from his evil dominance and plead humbly to free me from Satan's treacherous ".dominance

(.Humility Obedience to Allah (S.w.T

The only source of getting oneself rid of the intrigues of Satan is the Court of Allah (S.w.T.) through prayer and lamentation. Allah (S.w.T.) definitely listens to one who :laments with humility. Allah (S.w.T.) says

فَلَوْلا إِذْ جاءهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُواْ وَلَـكِن قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ

Yet why did they not, when Our punishment came to them, humble themselves? But their hearts hardened and the Shaitan made what they did fair-seeming to them. ((Sura al-An'aam, ۶:۴۳

If they had remembered Allah (S.w.T.) at the time they became the victims of the calamity, and pleaded with Him with humility and lamentation, He would certainly have given them salvation. But Satan kept them away from Remembering Allah .(S.w.T.) by engrossing them in carnal desires

One who forgets Allah (S.w.T.), trusts only in the circumstances of acquiring benefits and warding off harms. He thinks it is unnecessary to plead with Allah (S.w.T.) lamenting humbly. Such a person will be deprived of the attention of Allah (S.w.T.) in .times of difficulty and will be unable to protect himself from the intrigues of his enemy

(.About Hadrat Yusuf (a.s

Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.)'s episode of getting

forced into loneliness with Zulaikha is full of lessons for people. To save himself from the temptations of Zulaikha, Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.) lamented and pleaded with Allah (S.w.T.), and Allah (S.w.T.) saved him from the calamity in a wondrous manner. A complete Chapter of the Holy Qur'an has been earmarked to relate this episode that people take lesson from it and in times of difficulty follow the footsteps of Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.). This Chapter of the Qur'an is a beacon for achieving felicity and guidance for people

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُوْلِي الأَلْبَابِ

In their histories there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding. (Sura Yusuf, (۱۲:۱۱۱

.(.It is appropriate that we dwell briefly on the episode of Hadrat Yusuf (a.s

Love Renders Helpless

Although Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.) was bought by Aziz of Egypt as a slave, his personality and character impressed Aziz so much that he treated Yusuf (a.s.) with great respect and consideration. He was provided quarters in the palace of Aziz and it is there that he attained majority from childhood. Aziz had very strongly commended Hadrat Yusuf .(a.s.)'s good character to his queen, Zulaikha

Besides the specific recommendation of her husband, Aziz, Zulaikha was herself much impressed with the good looks and character of Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.). She admired him very much. She fell madly in love with him. This became a major and destructive scandal for the realm of Egypt. She was rendered helpless in front of her bondsman slave. She planned every moment to be in his company. But however

much she tried, she did not meet with any success. She tried much to entice him with her charms and beauty. She only got back only quiet and disinterest from Yusuf (a.s.) .in return

The True Love

Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.) was free of the carnal desires and deeply in love with Allah (S.w.T.). He was so engrossed with the ultimate bliss that the transient beauty and charm had no meaning for him. Zulaikha, therefore, was defeated in all her attempts at tempting .him. When it was unbearable for her, she decided to take the final step

She converted a remote room of her palace as her private boudoir. She got it furnished with great care. She then dressed herself in a sensuous manner to enhance her charms and called Yusuf (a.s.) into her boudoir. She was sure that he would not be able to escape from her charms now and would fulfill her desires. She was also .proudly confident that since he was her slave, he will have to comply with her wish

As soon as Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.) entered the room, she shut the door and presented "!herself to him with all the charms at her command and said, "Come! Fulfill my wish

None Other Than Allah (S.w.T.) Can Help

Imagine the predicament of Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.) at this stage. He was confronted with such a huge calamity. Such a trial it was for him! On the one hand the charm of Zulaikha's profound beauty and on the other satanic temptations and environment. The Queen of Egypt was inviting, rather commanding, him to

succumb to her charms. It is true that there was nothing to protect him other than Allah (S.w.T.)'s help!

But Yusuf, whose heart was full of Allah (S.w.T.)'s love, didn't comply with the carnal wish of the queen of Egypt and his feet remained firm on the path of righteousness. He pleaded with Allah (S.w.T.), lamenting, for His help against the machination of Satan.

Isti'adha With Allah (S.w.T.)

At this stage Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.) said:

قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّی أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَایَ إِنَّهُ لاَ یُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

He said: I seek Allah's refuge, surely my Lord made good my abode: Surely the unjust do not prosper. (Sura Yusuf, ۱۲:۲۳)

Hadrat Yusuf told Zulaikha that his respect and value in the eyes of her husband, and her own, is because of Allah (S.w.T.)'s Wish that He made you favorably disposed towards me. Therefore, I shall have to obey Him and seek His help to save myself from your temptations. Since your desire and wish is satanic, my compliance with it would bring Allah (S.w.T.)'s Retribution on me! Therefore, I cannot accede to your wish and displease Allah (S.w.T.) who has endowed bounties on me directly or through you. Going against His commands is impossible for me!

The Real Succour

Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.), who was a dedicated creature of Allah (S.w.T.) and His true lover, sought Allah (S.w.T.)'s help and protection in the matter which was full of dangers. Allah (S.w.T.) too had filled his heart with the light of faith and had given him strength of conviction that he refrained from the sin and

protected himself from all the temptations of Zulaikha. In fact to save himself against her advances, he ran towards the bolted door. Zulaikha at the height of her carnal desire pulled at the shirt of Yusuf (a.s.) from behind. Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.) was successful in getting out of the door but his shirt was torn from the back because Zulaikha was pulling it with extreme ferocity. When both of them emerged from the room, they .found Aziz standing in front of them

Zulaikha took the initiative, to prove herself innocent, told to her husband, Aziz, that .Yusuf (a.s.) was trying to molest her and that he should be put into prison

Now Yusuf (a.s.) had to tell the truth. He told Aziz, the King of Egypt that Zulaikha .herself was nursing foul intentions

A babe in the cradle spoke, with the wish of Allah (S.w.T.), and said that if Yusuf (a.s.)'s shirt was torn from the front then he is guilty of what Zulaikha is accusing him of. But he was running away from her to save himself, and she was trying to prevent him from going away by holding his shirt from the back then it would be torn only at the back. In this event, he is not guilty of the act that Zulaikha is accusing him of. This .witness went in favour of Yusuf (a.s.) and Allah (S.w.T.) has relieved him of the trouble

كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاء إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ

Thus (it was) that We might turn away..

from him evil and indecency, surely he was one of Our sincere servants. (Sura Yusuf, ۱۲:۲۴)

Further Trial

Certain ladies of Egypt upbraided Zulaikha for falling in love with a slave. Zulaikha tried to convince them that they could not possibly imagine the temptingly handsome looks of Yusuf (a.s.). She told them that the proudest of women would surrender to him without a whimper of protest.

She invited all these ladies for a meal and in the midst of that, she summoned Yusuf (a.s.). When he came, all the women fell in love with him at the first sight. They were so much engrossed in looking at him that the oranges they were about to cut with the knives in their hands, fell off and they cut their own fingers in utter confusion. This was a very difficult situation for him.

Prior to this he had to face only Zulaikha. But now there was a bevy of beauties, who were after him. They too made the same demands as Zulaikha did earlier. In his helplessness, Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.) appealed to Allah (S.w.T.) with humility and lamentation to protect him from the intrigue of the women. He pleaded with Allah (S.w.T.) that if He didn't protect him, he would join the ranks of the ignorant people.

Allah (S.w.T.) protected him from Satan's machination and gave to his heart the light of faith. He gave him such strength that Hadrat Yusuf (a.s.) overpowered all the women and their intrigue became ineffective. He agreed rather to go into

prison rather than succumbing to their overtures. Allah (S.w.T.) answered his prayer .and saved him from the intrigue of those women

A Tale of Admonition

If this story is properly understood, every person who has total faith in Allah (S.w.T.) will seek His Protection whenever he is under pressure of carnal temptations. Allah .(S.w.T.) will definitely answer his prayer and protect him from satanic temptations

In conclusion of this discussion we are recounting here a recommendation of Amir al-.(.Mu'minīn, Imam 'Ali (a.s

(.Isti'adha of Imam 'Ali (a.s

Nawf al-Bikali said that he saw Hadrat Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) going out of the city and proceeding swiftly towards the desert. Nawf asked him, "O Maula! Where are you going?" He replied, "O Nawf! Let me go. My wishes and my needs are calling me towards my true love!" Nawf asked, "O Master! What are your wishes?" He replied, "Allah (S.w.T.) knows very well the center of my wishes and it is not necessary to tell anyone else about my desires. Man has to take care not to tell others about his ".(.desires and wishes lest he make others partners to Allah (S.w.T

Then Nawf said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin! I am worried that at all times striving to accumulate worldly wealth, I have made the world as the sole axis of my activity and am depriving myself of the preparation for the Hereafter!" Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said, "Get attached to Allah's Munificence. He is the protector of the helpless and succour of the pious." Nawf said, "O Maula! Kindly guide me to that Court." Hadrat 'Ali

a.s.) said, "Allah is Beneficent and Great. He doesn't disappoint anyone. With a true heart and total dedication think of Him and you can achieve your desires with His help."(1)

p: 256

1- Ref: Bihar al-Anwār, Vol 9, Kitab ad-Du'a, Chapter: Ad'iyaa wa munajaat.

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

:Address of the central office
Isfahan, Abdorazaq St, Haj Mohammad JafarAbadei Alley, Shahid Mohammad HasanTavakkoly Alley, Number plate ۱۲۹, first floor
Website: www.ghbook.ir
Email: Info@ghbook.ir
Central office Tel: ۰۳۱۳۴۴۹۰۱۲۵
۰۲۱ ـ Tehran Tel: ۸۸۳۱۸۷۲۲
Commerce and sale: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹
Users' affairs: ۰۹۱۳۲۰۰۰۱۰۹

Introduction of the Center – Ghaemiyeh Digital Library